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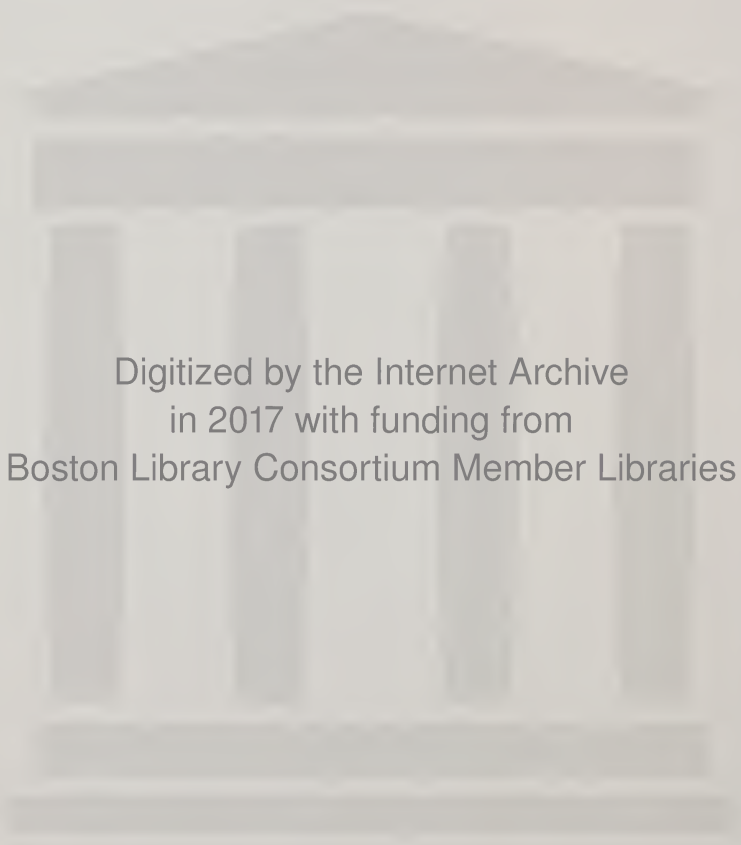


Edited by JEFFREY BUTLER

EACH year the Seminars on African History are held at the African Studies Center at Boston University. The seminars provide for regular meetings of scholars and provoke informed discussions on specific topics of African interest. In particular, the seminars were designed as occasions for outstanding younger scholars to both present their own work and discuss papers by their colleagues.

The majority of the papers in this volume were presented during the 1963-1964 seminars and cover a wide range of subjects of interest to Africanists. In the editor's opinion, "historians should not fail to exploit the considerable skills of anthropologists and other social scientists who, in the course of research already completed, have inevitably gone into historical questions." To further this, pertinent essays on archaeology and anthropology are here included with the history papers, giving a new scope to an already diversified field of interest.

The map on the jacket was adapted by Jerome Schuerger from "Découverte du Cap de Bonne Espérance," Plate XXXII in Charles de la Roncière, *La Découverte de l'Afrique au Moyen Age* (Cairo, 1925). Reproduced by permission of the Société de Géographie d'Egypte.



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Volume II

African History



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VOLUME II

African History

Edited by
Jeffrey Butler

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PREFACE

With this volume, the African Studies Center of Boston University introduces a modification in the series title. The former *Boston University Papers in African History* will now be known as *Boston University Papers on Africa*. Subsequent volumes in this series will deal with political affairs and interdisciplinary subjects as well as history. This volume, Volume II, consists mostly of papers presented during the 1963-1964 meetings of the Seminars on African History held by the African Studies Center. Other volumes are in the course of preparation. Volume III, edited by Jeffrey Butler and A. A. Castagno, includes papers given at the Seminars on African Politics held between 1963 and 1965, and others submitted directly by the authors; Volume IV is a group of essays on historical and archaeological subjects, collected and edited by Norman R. Bennett.

Most of the papers in this volume are wholly or partly concerned with the activities of non-African groups and individuals in the colonial period, albeit on issues related to some part of Africa. Enthusiasm among the growing group of African historians is certainly great, but it is, perhaps, fair to say that there is more talk than work on the difficult problems of precolonial history. A new generation of historians is being trained now, hopefully to bombard editors with papers which their more senior colleagues could not have written. If so, as an editor, I can only pray, unlike the infantrymen of the twentieth century, for the barrage from the other side to begin.

The widespread preference for subjects which have a close relationship with colonial history is probably due to the understandable reluctance of scholars already trained in departments of history to master difficult languages and techniques, which may be feared to be applicable only in a limited number of societies. This may be a problem that will disappear because of generous grants from foundations and support under the National Defense Education Act. In the meantime, historians should not fail to exploit the considerable skills of anthropologists and other social scientists who, in the course of research already completed, have inevitably gone into

historical questions. The papers from Creighton Gabel (archaeology) and Ronald Cohen (anthropology) are therefore welcome, and I hope they will serve as a goad and an example to others. Historians should encourage their colleagues in other disciplines to produce papers in African history.

Many people helped me in preparing this volume. W. O. Brown, Director of the African Studies Center, has, as always, supported the seminar and series generously, making available both secretarial help and money for the expenses of contributors. In June 1965, Professor Brown retired as director: I hope this series will continue for many years as one of the "voices" of the Center that he founded.

Many scholars gave me confidential opinions on individual papers, which considerably lightened the burden of judgment as to merit. Norman Bennett and Dan McCall were consulted on many questions. Alan Booth, Svend Holsoe, and William Lye took a great deal of trouble to make sure that errors were eliminated. Alyce Havey and Jacoba van Schaik were responsible for all those things which secretaries can do and scholars cannot. I thank all of them and, of course, must add that the final responsibility for the editing rests on me.

JEFFREY BUTLER

Wesleyan University
February 1965

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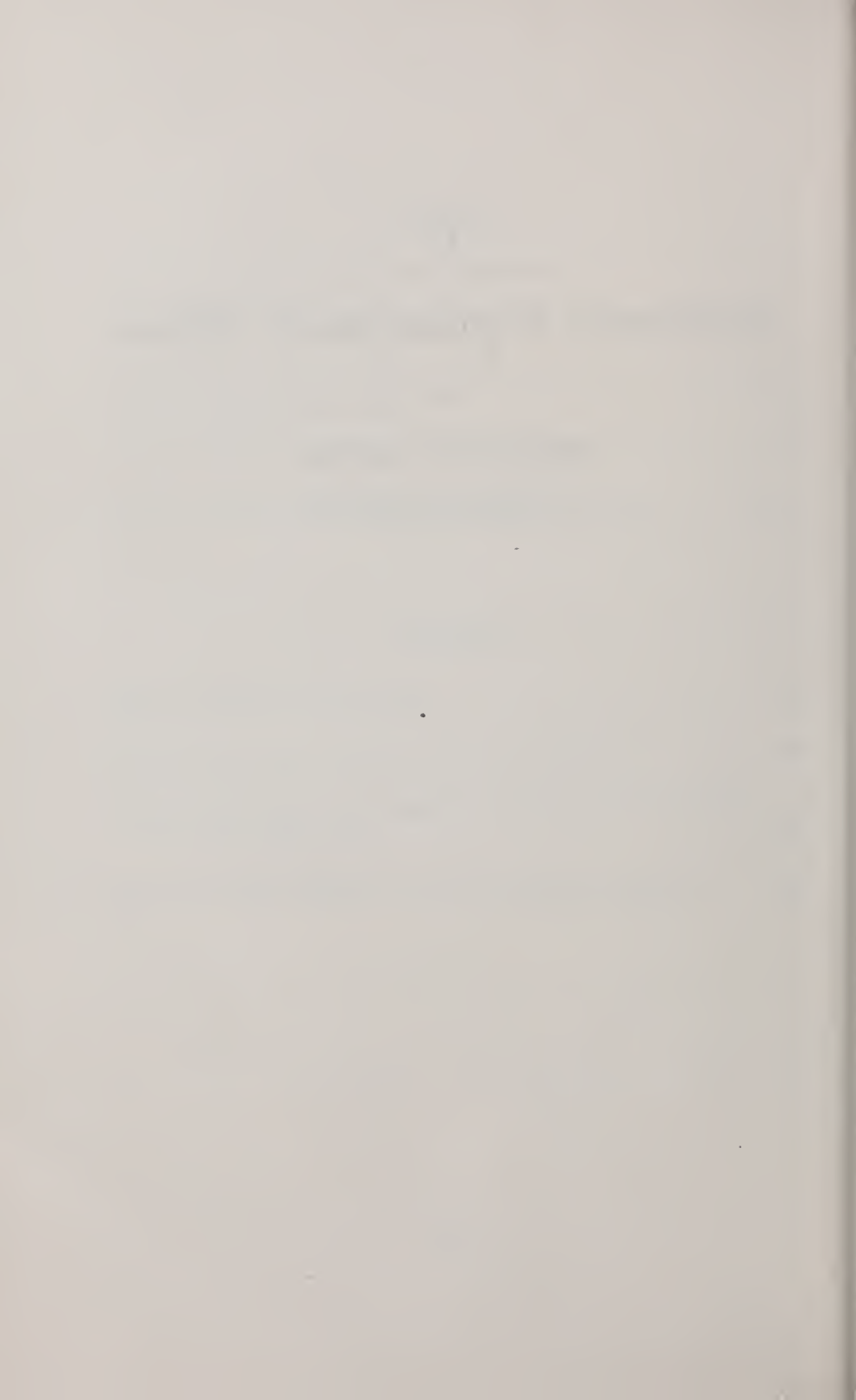
Prehistoric Populations of Africa

by

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IN REVIEWING THE COMMENTARIES of historians, archaeologists, and some physical anthropologists on the human types which contributed to various aspects of Africa's past, one finds a surprising degree of superficiality in the reconstructions offered. It is not my intention to set about producing a reclassification of African peoples, past or present, or even to add my name to the growing list of those attempting new definitions of "race." I simply would like to make some observations on the current assessments of physical types and the prevailing attitudes regarding their respective roles in African prehistory. One facet of the problem involves relatively simple anthropological concepts (or, rather, the failure to apply them), while another, more complex facet has to do with changes in concepts of human biology over the past few years. The latter have considerable bearing not only on our estimations of existing physical variations but also on our understanding of earlier populations, which are the concern of this paper.¹

1. RACIAL ORIGINS

Race, Language, and Culture

One notable tendency among Africanist scholars is the deplorable—and inexcusable—predilection for confusing race, language, and culture. The careful discrimination among these phenomena has long since been well established elsewhere in the world, in practice as well as in theory; in Africa, much confusion still prevails. Thus we find undue emphasis being placed upon "Hamitic" peoples: because these groups speak similar languages and follow a pastoral way of life, they somehow belong to the same race, however much

¹ Interest in this problem was initiated as the result of fieldwork in Rhodesia supported by the National Science Foundation, and while writing this study I have been the recipient of a grant from the Joint African Studies Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council.

they may differ physically. As Lewis has shown, these people are further equated, often uncritically, with the dissemination in Africa of various forms of social and political institutions.² It does not stop here, for having once concocted such associations, further concessions are soon forthcoming. The pastoral Fulani, who belong to the West Atlantic subfamily of Niger-Congo languages, are neatly fitted into the Hamitic linguistic fold, and the Khoisan-speaking Hottentots, with their physical affinities to the Bushmen, are treated in the same fashion.³ This attitude is not limited to old-fashioned historians and linguists, since we find the same line defended in Huntingford's recent discussion of African peoples: "Greenberg objects also to a correlation between 'pastoral' life and the speaking of Hamitic languages. His reasons, which have a 'racialist' flavour, are not very convincing, for he has apparently failed to realize the extent to which the Hamites are pastoral."⁴

Among cultural historians, Murdock seems to be one of the few who regard the "Hamitic" affinities of the Hottentots as nonsense.⁵ Even in recent texts on physical anthropology, a Hamitic increment in these people seems to be taken for granted.⁶ We may also note that Ashley Montagu has a racial category of "Bantu-speaking Negroes," a "convenience" for distinguishing certain Central and South African populations from other Negroids.⁷ He of course knows better, but this scarcely helps to clarify matters for cultural and social anthropologists.

² H. S. Lewis, "Ethnology and African Culture-History," unpublished MS (1962), and "Historical Problems in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, no. 96 (1962), 504-562.

³ J. Greenberg, "The Languages of Africa," *International Journal of American Linguistics*, no. 29 (1963).

⁴ G. W. B. Huntingford, "The Peopling of the Interior of East Africa by Its Modern Inhabitants," in *History of East Africa*, ed. R. Oliver and G. Mathew (London, 1963), 69.

⁵ G. P. Murdock, *Africa: Its Peoples and their Culture History* (New York, 1959), 56-57.

⁶ M. F. A. Montagu, *An Introduction to Physical Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (Springfield, 1960), 430; C. S. Coon, *The Origin of Races* (New York, 1962), 646.

⁷ Montagu, *Introduction*, 424.

Migration Theories

Another problem, and one not altogether unrelated to that above, is recognizable as a well-entrenched disposition to explain historical developments in Africa—especially south of the Sahara—in terms of migrations which introduced cultural changes in the form of improved technologies, new social systems, or more elaborate political structures. The migration question itself is largely a cultural-historical one, not biological, though it is often seen to have racial overtones. As such, it is subject to methodological examination with respect to cultural form and function, both qualitatively and quantitatively, as well as geographical and chronological considerations.⁸

Insofar as the "Hamitic theory" is structured in racial terms, it has been carried back far into prehistoric times. "Proto-Hamites" are said to have first appeared in the Kenya Upper Capsian at Gamble's Cave in deposits at least 7,000–8,000 years old. Leakey believes this industry (and, by implication at least, the associated physical type) to have come from Palestine via Arabia in Upper Pleistocene times.⁹ Yet there seems to be little in Arabia that would warrant such an origin.¹⁰ Comparable physical types have even been recognized by some workers in southern Africa,¹¹ but these "Proto-Hamites" ("Caucasoids," "Europoids," "Erythriotes") are all too frequently either pulled out of context or loosely interpreted in what might be termed a "morphological-historical" sense. For example, the Kakkamas Hottentots, often cited as historical representatives of such migrations, are known to have intermarried with Bushmen and Negroes.¹²

Honea, using a good deal of questionable archaeological inter-

⁸ I. Rouse, "The Inference of Migrations from Anthropological Evidence," in "Migrations in New World Culture History," ed. R. H. Thompson, *University of Arizona Social Science Bulletin*, no. 27 (1958), 63-68.

⁹ L. S. B. Leakey, *Adam's Ancestors* (New York, 1960), 130.

¹⁰ G. Caton-Thompson, "The Evidence of South Arabian Palaeoliths and the Question of Pleistocene Land Connection with Africa," *Proceedings of the Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory* (London, 1957), 380-384.

¹¹ L. H. Wells, "Late Stone Age Human Types in Central Africa," *ibid.*, 183-185.

¹² R. Singer, "The Boskop 'Race' Problem," *Man*, no. 58 (1958), 232.

pretation, finds Hamites all over the Maghreb, Northeast Africa, the Sahara, and East Africa—with the Hottentot “Hamites” migrating to South Africa directly from the Sahara through the Congo.¹³ During the time in question (late Stone Age), we have evidence only of Negroid populations in the Sudan and southern Sahara.

British historians as well as members of the *Kulturhistorische Schule* seem compelled to seek out migrations in order to account for any significant cultural changes in Africa.¹⁴ Huntingford has Hamites swarming over East Africa in waves in order to explain the physical variations among modern peoples there. Lewis, in the papers already cited, discusses these and similar shortcomings of cultural-historical methodology in some detail.¹⁵ He suggests, among other things, that the movements of peoples in northern and eastern Africa were more limited and less momentous than previously assumed. He argues that the Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic)-speaking peoples as a whole were indigenous to the eastern Sudan and that the Galla and Somali (eastern Cushitic-speaking groups) moved, at a relatively late date, north and east from southern Ethiopia—northern Kenya rather than having invaded East Africa as exotic foreigners. Whether or not this is true, the fact remains that the sole prehistoric large-scale migration which seems to be documented by independent lines of evidence (archaeology, radio-carbon dating, linguistics, cultural distributions) is the spread of Bantu-speaking peoples in Central, East, and South Africa, possibly from a West African source,¹⁶ and even in this instance we are in need of much more detailed proofs. Notably, there is no evidence that a single physical type was involved, although it is commonly, and not unjustifiably, supposed that the people were Negro.

In another vein, we find Coon treating Bushmen (“Capoids”) as North African immigrants, when virtually every shred of evidence

¹³ K. H. Honea, “A Contribution to the History of the Hamitic Peoples of Africa,” *Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica*, no. 5 (Vienna, 1958), *passim*.

¹⁴ J. D. Fage, *An Introduction to the History of West Africa* (Cambridge, Eng., 1959); R. A. Oliver and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1962); Huntingford, “Peopling of the Interior.”

¹⁵ Lewis, “Ethnology” and “Historical Problems.”

¹⁶ J. Greenberg, *Studies in African Linguistic Classification* (New Haven, 1955), *passim*.

points to an origin in Southern Africa.¹⁷ Coon's explanation of an alternative source relates to relict hunting-and-gathering populations of the Sahara who are not Bush physically and to "Bushman" rock paintings in North Africa, which are fully as much like East Spanish rock art and have never been related convincingly to South African art.

Racial Typologies

Before giving our attention to problems more intimately associated with the treatment of prehistoric human remains as such, it is necessary that we briefly examine some of the fundamental approaches to an understanding of physical variability.

It is rather difficult to explain just what "race" means to physical anthropologists at the present time, since current opinions are in a state of flux. Apart from those who still cling to outmoded views, it can be said that a more dynamic evaluation of human variability has come into being, one that is no longer strictly caliper-oriented. It has even become respectable to challenge the very existence of races, especially in regard to classificatory delineation. Livingstone, as a geneticist, is convinced that the proper study of human variability is individual genes and that one should trace the distribution and histories of specific genes rather than work within an artificial, and sometimes misleading, framework of racial typology.¹⁸ Washburn, as a student of functional morphology, likewise eschews racial classification as a worthwhile exercise because variability means nothing unless it can be explained in terms of interrelated genetic and cultural histories.¹⁹ More specifically, we must study the causes of evolutionary change (of which races are a minor reflection) and do so within specific cultural and environmental contexts.

For problems of race formation, then, archaeology and its sister sciences are going to be of greater value to the physical anthropologist in understanding prehistoric populations than extrapolation

¹⁷ Coon, *Origin of Races*, 636ff.

¹⁸ F. B. Livingstone, "On the Non-Existence of Human Races," *Current Anthropology*, III (1962), 279-281.

¹⁹ S. L. Washburn, "The Study of Race," *American Anthropologist*, no. 65 (1963), 521-531.

from preconceived racial typologies. This inevitably means more than just digging up the bones of prehistoric man; we must also, as far as possible, reconstruct cultural behavior in particular environmental settings. Tracing populations beyond historical horizons cannot be accomplished solely by the traditional methods of comparative skeletal morphology or by the newer method of comparing present gene frequencies. Both of these depend implicitly, if not explicitly, upon racial typologies of existing peoples, and the phenotypical configurations (much less the genetic ones) of earlier peoples need not have been the same (and would not have been, according to the almost universal rejection of the notion of "pure races"). It is not claimed that these methods are not useful as adjuncts to a wider approach, but they do need to be seen in proper perspective.

Comparative Morphology and Racial History

Skeletal morphology by itself is notoriously limited, even when one is dealing only with modern man, since the soft tissues reveal physical distinctions of racial significance much more clearly than bones and because there is much overlap in the racial characteristics of skeletal components. By questioning the validity of typologies for the living, we automatically admit the drawbacks of skeletal classifications, where the errors can only be compounded. While acknowledging the fact that racial differences are genetic in origin, we do not ordinarily approach genetic variation through bones because we know too little of genetic factors relating to bone formation; and other parts of the body such as the circulatory system have, up to this point, been found more easily subject to investigation. Until we know more about bone growth and function and their genetic bases, examination of skeletal remains is bound to be of limited value. In the meantime, we should not continue to divorce these remains from their cultural contexts and thereby lose valuable data for future genetic and morphological research.

With regard to documentation of prehistoric physical differences, a few comments concerning the treatment of skeletal remains might be made. One attitude contributing to confused interpretations of such material is the obsession with racial typology, particularly in the predisposition of most investigators to equate earlier *sapiens*

groups with living ones. Thus we find "Caucasoids" as far afield as East and South Africa and "Negroes" on the Italian Riviera. When the typologies do not mesh, some prefer to invent new races, hence the "Boskopoids" and "Australoids" of South Africa. Another alternative is to create hybrids, regardless of the probabilities of hybridization having taken place or the difficulties of recognizing them skeletally. Added to this is the fact that few make sufficient allowances for variation, an especially important point in view of the small size of most samples. This shortcoming is apparent when individual specimens are taken out of context (for instance, assigning "Boskopoid," "Australoid," or "Caucasoid" characters to one or two crania found with others that clearly show Bush-Hottentot affinities). Le Gros Clark's admonitions concerning the pitfalls of unnecessarily multiplying genera and species (in this case, races), and underestimating ranges of variation when small samples or even single specimens are involved, are just as pertinent to studies of prehistoric races as they are to studies of fossil man.²⁰

Furthermore, much of the prehistoric skeletal material in Africa is subject to chronological uncertainties or is not properly placed within a cultural context. This is sometimes the result of its having been recovered under conditions in which cultural or chronological associations could not be ascertained; but all too often it is a reflection of slipshod excavation.

Gene Frequencies and Racial History

The possibility of deducing racial histories from tabulations of gene frequencies alone is now seen to be dangerously oversimplified. The optimistic enthusiasm for this approach a few years ago²¹ has lessened appreciably, although some individuals seem to be holding out.²² The breakthrough toward a real understanding of the selective nature of human genetic structure came with the work

²⁰ W. E. Le Gros Clark, *The Fossil Evidence for Human Evolution* (Chicago, 1955), *passim*.

²¹ W. C. Boyd, *Genetics and the Races of Man* (Boston, 1950), *passim*.

²² W. C. Boyd, "Four Achievements of the Genetical Method in Physical Anthropology," *American Anthropologist*, no. 65 (1963) 243-252; R. R. Gates, "Racial Genetics: A New Branch of Anthropology," *Current Anthropology*, IV (1963), 208-209.

of Allison and others on the sickling trait in Africa.²³ The Rh system was known to be subject to selection from the first, and the adaptive nature of the ABO system, although still imperfectly understood, has thrown this whole problem into sharper focus.²⁴ Further information has been gained through the study of abnormal hemoglobins.²⁵ The result of these findings is that we cannot assume gene frequencies to remain constant through time, and therefore they can be used effectively only with other kinds of evidence. The geneticist is in no position to become a cultural historian, as is popularly believed; on the contrary, he requires detailed cultural historical facts in order to work out the history of specific genes. Livingstone's history of the sickling gene, based on ecological and cultural considerations, is the classic example of this.²⁶

In all probability, gene-frequency calculations alone can accomplish but two things: to help to demonstrate relatively recent historical connections between different groups of people or to show broad distinctions between major geographical populations (say, Africans versus Europeans or Asians). More important is the elucidation of the bases for genetic and morphological variation in different populations as determined by genetic analysis in conjunction with other kinds of evidence.

²³ A. C. Allison, "Protection Afforded by Sickle-Cell Trait Against Subtertian Malarial Infection," *British Medical Journal*, I (1954), 290-294. The sickling gene, which causes a severe form of anemia, is largely restricted to populations of Sub-Saharan Africa.

²⁴ A. M. Brues, "Selection and Polymorphism in the ABO Blood Groups," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, XII (1954), 559-597; J. A. Buckwalter et al., "Natural Selection Associated with the ABO Blood Group," *Science*, no. 123 (1956), 840-841; F. B. Livingstone, "Natural Selection, Disease, and Ongoing Human Evolution, as Illustrated by the ABO Blood Groups," *Human Biology*, no. 32 (1960), 17-27.

²⁵ W. W. Zuelzer et al., "Abnormal Hemoglobins," in *Progress in Hematology*, ed. I. Toncantins (New York, 1956); J. A. Hunt and V. M. Ingram, "The Genetical Control of Protein Structure: The Abnormal Human Hemoglobins," in *Biochemistry of Human Genetics*, ed. Wolstenholme and O'Connor (London, 1959); F. B. Livingstone, "Balancing the Human Hemoglobin Polymorphisms," *Human Biology*, no. 33 (1961), 205-219.

²⁶ F. B. Livingstone, "Anthropological Implications of Sickle-Cell Gene Distribution in West Africa," *American Anthropologist*, no. 60 (1958), 533-562.

Causes of Human Variability

Of the four recognized causes of evolutionary change—mutation, selection, gene flow, and gene drift²⁷—only the first seems fairly immune to cultural practices (if we ignore modern means of increasing mutation rates through indiscriminate use of nuclear devices, chemical insecticides, and the like). As we have already seen, selection—culturally as well as naturally induced—cannot be ignored. However, some of the “climatic” explanations of race²⁸ are probably oversimplified and even reflect a basic lack of anatomical and physiological knowledge.²⁹ But if some of these particular theories are ill-considered, one must look at human variability in terms of the reciprocal effects of the human organism, environment, and culture upon one another. Human ecology can never be quite the same as that of animals.

Birdsell has argued that current anthropology tends to play down the environmental determinants of human biology and culture to too great a degree.³⁰ One must agree with him that environmental factors undoubtedly impose more restrictions on foraging populations than on agriculturists, but this only qualifies rather than negates the cultural contributions to change. An alteration in mating preferences could still be of more consequence genetically than a shift in climatic patterns, which might be met effectively even by food collectors.

As Washburn indicates,³¹ there is no such thing as an adaptive gene; it will be adaptive or nonadaptive under specific conditions, and these conditions will not necessarily remain static. The Bushmen, for example, have avoided picking up the sickling gene not

²⁷ Gene flow: intergroup mating. Gene drift: random fluctuations in gene frequencies occurring in small, isolated populations.

²⁸ C. S. Coon, M. Garn, and J. B. Birdsell, *Races* (Springfield, 1950), *passim*; D. F. Roberts, “Body Weight, Race and Climate,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, n.s. no. 11 (1953), 553-558; P. T. Baker, “Climate, Culture, and Evolution,” *Human Biology*, no. 32 (1960), 3-16.

²⁹ Washburn, “Study of Race,” 525-527.

³⁰ J. B. Birdsell, “On Population Structure in Generalized Hunting and Collecting Populations,” *Evolution*, XII (1958), 189-205.

³¹ Washburn, “Study of Race,” 525.

because of any distaste for mating with Negroes who have it, but probably because their settlement patterns (possibly developed through experience) have tended to keep them away from rivers and other areas where malaria is endemic.³² This in turn has prevented the creation of the conditions in which the sickling gene flourishes as part of a balanced polymorphism (the sickling gene appears to be associated with greater resistance to *falciparum* malaria, and so individuals possessing such a gene are selectively favored in this sense).

We have never been quite sure just how much effect the random alterations in gene frequencies known as gene drift have had in the promotion of racial differences in humans, but this is essentially a function of population size and isolation, both of which reflect cultural behavior. Technology and subsistence have as much bearing on the size of breeding populations as environment, and social behavior as well as geography can isolate them. It is possible that some of the morphological differences between human remains from different levels of the same archaeological sites could have resulted from gene drift; it is said to account for differences of the same order among Australian aborigines, who probably all descend from the same Upper Pleistocene immigrants.³³

Birdsell comments at some length on the longer periods of nursing infants among most food collectors and the relation of this to the size of effective breeding populations (and therefore to gene drift).³⁴ He estimates that the low variance in the number of offspring per mating (0-6) is about one half that of agricultural peoples. Whatever the causes, and they could be cultural, Kalahari Bushwomen seldom produce more than five children even though they are normally married at puberty.³⁵ Also relevant to the size of breeding population is the infant-mortality rate, which is obviously subject to cultural influences in the form of diet, birth practices, infanticide, and so on. Both cultural and natural inducements to a higher mortality rate may be more pronounced among hunter-

³² R. Singer, "Some Biological Aspects of the Bushman," *Zeitschrift für Morphologie und Anthropologie*, no. 51 (1960), 4.

³³ Singer, "Boskop."

³⁴ Birdsell, "Population," 193-194.

³⁵ Singer, "Biological Aspects," 5.

gatherers like the Bushmen who have lived, or are living, under stringent conditions with a limited technology. According to Singer,³⁶ infant mortality among the Kalahari Bushmen runs to about 50 per cent. In a collection of 182 Stone Age (Oranian) skeletons at Taforalt, Morocco, nearly 53 per cent of this 13,000-year-old population were infants.³⁷ Vallois indicates that of a total sample of 163 Oranian individuals, including some from Taforalt, 62 per cent died before reaching 21 years of age.³⁸

On the other hand, gene drift, like mutation, selection, and migration, can be overworked as an explanation of racial differences. It is quite possible that we sometimes stress the isolation of food-collecting groups more than we should, for they are often exogamous and range over large areas. There is some evidence of the territory covered by prehistoric hunters and gatherers in South Africa in the form of rock paintings done by the same artist as much as 65 miles apart, and depictions of marine animals up to 100 miles from the sea.³⁹ Likewise we may be guilty of placing too much emphasis upon similarities between prehistoric food collectors and living Bushmen, whom we know to have been driven out of the more desirable areas into the most marginal types of environment. This change, which has occurred largely in the past few centuries, has reduced the Bushman population south of the Zambezi alone to perhaps a twentieth or less of its original size⁴⁰ and probably could not help but also cut down the size of local groups. In the

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ D. Ferembach, "Les Restes Humains Epipaleolithiques de la Grotte de Taforalt (Maroc Oriental)," *Comptes-Rendus Hebdomadaires des Séances de l'Académie des Sciences*, CCXLVIII (Paris, 1959), 3465-3467.

³⁸ H. Vallois, "Vital Statistics in Prehistoric Population as Determined from Archaeological Data," in Heizer and Cook, eds., *The Application of Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* (Chicago, 1960), 195-196.

³⁹ J. D. Clark, *The Prehistory of Southern Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1959), 217.

⁴⁰ Tobias has estimated the number of living Bushmen at about 55,000. P. V. Tobias, "On the Survival of the Bushmen," *Africa*, no. 26 (1956), 174-186. Singer feels that this figure is too high, but guesses that there must have been at least a million Bushmen south of the Zambezi in early historic times—when decimation of their numbers surely must have been underway already. Singer, "Biological Aspects." Actually, Singer's own figure seems rather high from an ecological point of view.

final analysis, prehistoric population size and settlement patterns can only be defined by more extensive and careful archaeological investigation.

Gene flow tends to break down dissimilarities between different groups by introducing the same genes to numbers of local populations. Geneticists have been rather prone to invoke migrations also, but genes, like culture traits, can be transmitted without widespread population movements. Local-group exogamy, warfare, slavery, and trade all aid in breaking down genetic barriers that might contribute to phenotypical differences of a racial order. As far as the social dynamics relating to population structure are concerned, it should be possible to construct models that could be used to illustrate the genetic significance of exogamy or other cultural factors even in prehistoric levels.⁴¹

The amount of gene flow in Africa is to be seen in the fact that one can recognize an African population and distinguish it from those of other major areas in the world. Newman, quoting Roberts, cites the following genes common to populations south of the Sahara: high frequencies of Rh chromosome cDe(R_0), blood group P, the Kidd gene Jk^a, low frequencies of S (MNS system), and the Duffy gene Fy^a.⁴² To these he adds the relatively high frequencies of the Hunter (Hu) and Henshaw (He) genes, gene v in the Rh system, Duffy subtype Fy, Js^a (Sutter blood group), abnormal hemoglobins S (sickling) and C, and haptoglobin Hp¹.⁴³ The essential "African-ness" of Sub-Saharan peoples is further underlined by the fact that it seldom proves possible genetically to distinguish very clearly or consistently even among such morphologically diverse groups as Bushmen, Pygmies, and Negroes. At the same time, gene frequencies do not seem to indicate a close relationship between morphologically similar Melanesians and African Negroes⁴⁴ or between African and Oceanic Negritos.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Birdsell, "Population."

⁴² M. T. Newman, "Geographic and Microgeographic Races," *Current Anthropology*, IV (1963), 189-207; D. F. Roberts, "The Distribution of Some Human Serological Characters in Africa," *British Association for the Advancement of Science*, no. 51 (1956), 194-196.

⁴³ R. Singer, "Serum Haptoglobins in Africa," *South African Medical Journal*, no. 35 (1961), 520-523.

⁴⁴ T. Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (New Haven, 1962), 259.

⁴⁵ Boyd, "Four Achievements," 250-251.

In summary, the question of racial origins in Africa, as elsewhere, is a complex one that has been complicated by the confusion of biological attributes with those of a cultural nature and the over-worked projection of untested migration theories as an explanatory device. The perpetuation of these approaches in African studies is difficult to understand unless it is that some historians remain unwilling to credit black Africans with any significant accomplishments of their own, and thus feel compelled to introduce "Caucasoids" whenever possible. Above and beyond this, however, there are important problems relating to the identification of races and their reconstruction through time. Apart from the shortcomings of inadequate morphological data pertaining to prehistoric populations and our inability to utilize genetic factors in the manner envisioned by Boyd and others, we still know far too little of the prehistoric cultural and environmental backgrounds contributing to human variability. More intensive investigation of these can lead to better understanding of earlier Africans, although we cannot expect to find that such populations will necessarily coincide with stereotyped racial groups of modern times. The conclusions, and indeed the motivation, of such research will relate primarily to the unraveling of individual trait distributions, and these may or may not be directly applicable to problems of racial history in the conventional sense.

2. NORTH AND EAST AFRICA

Turning now to the evidence pertaining to prehistoric populations, we can examine some of the major collections of material and the theories relating to them. There are surprisingly few *sapiens* fossils or subfossils that can be confidently assigned to a period of time before the end of the Pleistocene. Ignoring such highly dubious examples as Leakey's Kanam and Kanjera remains, we find only a handful of examples which may possibly be of Upper Pleistocene date. Before describing the skeletal materials from different areas, it should be said that this scarcity of Pleistocene specimens does not necessarily betoken a later appearance of *Homo sapiens* in Africa than in Europe or Asia, as some have argued. There are serious dating problems to be dealt with, and the corpus of material is small and scattered. In fact, only the Maghreb, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and South Africa have given us any pre-Iron Age human remains of value up to this point, excepting a few from the Sudan

and interior Sahara. The skeletal material recovered from the Egyptian Predynastic and Neolithic appears seldom if ever to have been adequately described. It is desirable that we do not forget this skewed geographical representation, for it may unduly influence our interpretation of population distributions.

North Africa

In North Africa, numbers of human remains have been found in association with Oranian and Capsian (Mesolithic) industries over the years. The majority of such sites are concentrated in the Constantine region of northeastern Algeria (see the accompanying map). It should be noted that much of the total skeletal material has been lost or destroyed without being properly studied, so that the actual amount of available specimens is less than one might suppose.

There has been considerable controversy over the respective age and origin of the Oranian and the Capsian. The former is largely restricted to the littoral between Atlantic Morocco and the Gulf of Gabes; the Capsian occurs farther inland and is not found as far westward. The only C-14 dates for the Oranian are from Taforalt, Morocco, where they average 11,000 B.C. Capsian dates from Tunisian and Algerian sites range from 6650–4950 B.C. This, as well as some stratigraphic evidence, suggests the Oranian began earlier, although it lasted at least as long as the Capsian.⁴⁶ Certain authorities have maintained for years that the Oranian was nothing more than a coastal variant of the Capsian, as in a sense it was during its final stages.

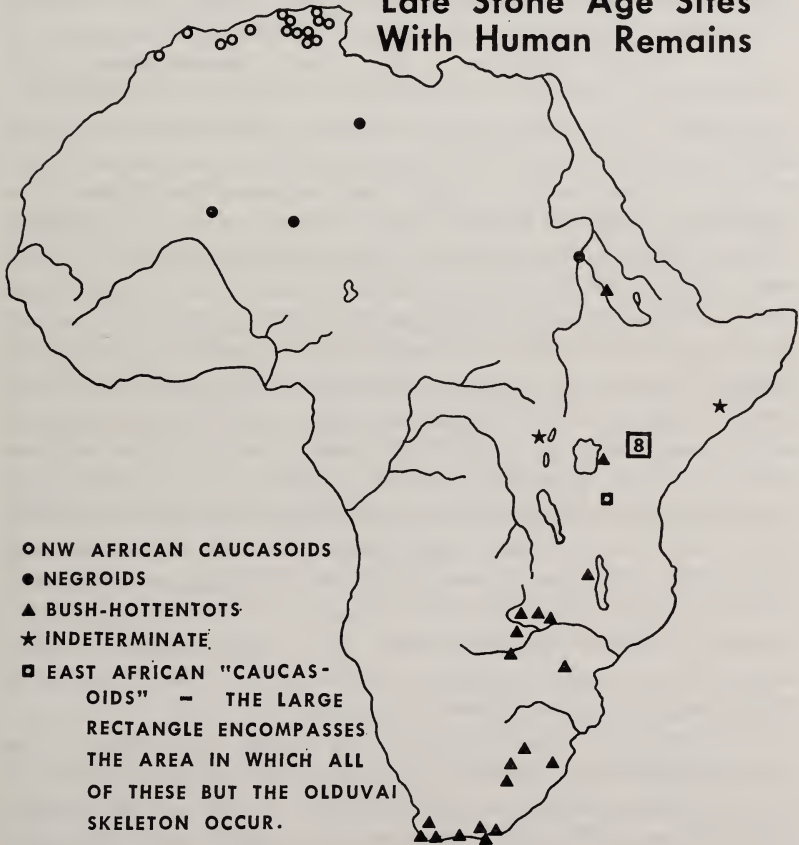
Briggs and Coon seek the origins of the Oranian in southwestern Asia;⁴⁷ McBurney derives it from the final Upper Paleolithic of southwestern Europe on the basis of its geographical proximity and the absence of Oranian-type industries between Cyrenaica and Palestine. All three seem to agree that the Capsian, directly or indirectly, must have come from the Near East also, but the same

⁴⁶ C. B. McBurney, *The Stone Age of Northern Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1960), 213-216.

⁴⁷ L. C. Briggs, "The Stone Age Races of Northwest Africa," American School of Prehistoric Research (Peabody Museum, Harvard University), *Bulletin*, no. 18 (1955), 58; Coon, *Origin of Races*, 604.

objections apply since it is confined to Northwest Africa, except for a few weak expressions along the Gulf of Sirte between Tunisia and Cyrenaica. On the other hand, the typological and technological resemblances between the Capsian and European microlithic indus-

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tries of Tardenoisian type have always been recognized. One is inclined to suggest, on the basis of the facts now at our disposal, that Northwest Africa from earliest Oranian through late Oranian-Capsian times (and to some extent during the Neolithic also) was part of a western Mediterranean cultural province, whatever the mechanics of diffusion may have been. That the Straits of Gibraltar

constituted a greater barrier to diffusion than fifteen hundred miles or so of arid coastline is almost beyond belief, especially since the Maghreb belongs to much the same ecological zone as the rest of the western Mediterranean.

Briggs has dealt with the Northwest African skeletal remains most exhaustively.⁴⁸ With fifty-six more or less usable crania, he has defined four "types" which, in order of chronological appearance, are (A) Palaemediterranean, (B) African Mediterranean, (C) African Alpine, and (D) Mechta-Afalou. With some qualifications, he has upheld the notion that the Oranian and Capsian were associated with distinct physical types. However, in his scheme, this is true only insofar as the A type does not occur in Capsian sites. Types B, C, and D are found in both Oranian and Capsian deposits.

Briggs's analytic approach to these materials was based on the system employed by Hooton for his Canary Islands and Pecos Pueblo studies, in which skulls were visually sorted into types and then subjected to statistical examination for verification. It is to be doubted whether this division into types or the quantitative treatment of them is valid.⁴⁹ Briggs, in a later work, perhaps rings the knell himself when he says: "The skeletal material that we have just discussed is both inadequate in quantity and too widely scattered geographically to serve as a sound basis for any final conclusions, and, what is worse, almost none of it can as yet be dated except within broad and uncertain limits."⁵⁰ To this one might add the observation that if some of the Oranian sites containing skeletal material are 5000-7000 years older than Capsian sites, as radio-carbon dating suggests, we could well expect to find differences in the makeup of the populations in question.

One should also underline the fact (as Briggs admits) that, of the forty-five specimens actually included in his type series, thirty are from Afalou-bou-Rhummel and five of the remainder from Mechta-el-Arbi. Even to the casual observer, this simply would imply that

⁴⁸ Briggs, "Stone Age Races."

⁴⁹ F. C. Howell, Review of Briggs's "Stone Age Races," *American Anthropologist*, no. 58 (1956), 584-585; J. T. Robinson, Review of Briggs's "Stone Age Races," *Man*, no. 55 (1955), 174.

⁵⁰ L. C. Briggs, "The Living Races of the Sahara Desert," *Papers of the Peabody Museum*, XXVIII (1958), 12.

we are dealing with a somewhat heterogeneous population which resembles contemporary prehistoric populations of the Mediterranean area in general. Just in looking at Briggs's photographs of type specimens, it is difficult to be impressed with the distinctions between them, and I would add that the existence of three or four different racial types, supposedly of different geographical origins, in the same site (and presumably belonging to the same time period) defies reason.⁵¹

Without going into this classification any further, there are two final points to be noted. One is that traits reminiscent of populations farther south are said to be present in the first three types. If these are indicative of non-Caucasoid intrusions, one cannot help but wonder where they may have come from. An interesting speculation (even if totally devoid of factual support) is that the Upper Paleolithic Aterian industries of the Sahara and Northwest Africa were produced by basically Negroid peoples who perhaps left their mark on the Oranians and Capsians. There is no demonstrable continuity between the Aterian and the later industries, which are supposed to have been of outside origin, and the Aterian does show the same retention of Levalloisio-Mousterian flaking techniques as most late Upper Pleistocene industries in Northeast, East, Central, and southern Africa. The western Sahara seems to have been less of a barrier during the Pleistocene than the Libyan Desert,⁵² and there is now believed to have been a period of increased humidity during Aterian times (as well as the wet phases of the late Acheulian and Neolithic periods), which would have promoted diffusion and population movements across the Sahara.⁵³ Secondly, Briggs notes similarities between his North African specimens and Leakey's Kenya Capsian and Elmenteitan crania. Other investigators also accept this association, but it is open to criticism. (I shall return to this shortly.)

Neolithic remains in North Africa are even scantier. In the Maghreb, Briggs finds a modified version of his Mechta-Afalou type

⁵¹ Briggs, "Stone Age Races," 29.

⁵² McBurney, *Stone Age*, 78.

⁵³ In viewing the Sahara as a physical barrier between the two parts of Africa, one must not assume the area has always been as it is today. At times, it has supported savannah-type flora and fauna, and signs of human occupation are correspondingly more numerous.

still predominating and expresses the opinion that this group contributed most heavily to the makeup of the eastern Berbers.⁵⁴ The addition of Neolithic projectile point forms, pottery, polished stone tools, and perhaps domestication to a Capsian-Oranian base he judges to be the result of diffusion rather than of migration, probably quite correctly. "Negroid" elements are again noted, but the explanation is simpler here. Briggs's "Neolithic of Capsian (or Oranian) Tradition" appears to coincide with the Neolithic wet phase of about 5500-2500 B.C., when the desert interior was much more intensively settled, and one can see indications of cultural ties all the way from the Maghreb down to the Sudan and eastward to the Nile. In fact, much of the cultural diffusion from the Nile area to Northwest Africa is likely to have been through the Sudan and southern Sahara.

About all one can say now of Northwest African Stone Age populations is that they probably were related to others of the Mediterranean basin. There is no real amount of information on the role played by these people in the Sahara before historic times. Excluding relatively recent intrusions of whites, Negroids appear to have been dominant in the Sudan and Sahara at least as far back as 5000-3000 B.C., and probably earlier. The contributions of Mediterranean whites and Sudanese Negroids in ancient Egypt is still not clear, although indications of cultural influences from Southwest Asia and the Sudan-Sahara region suggest that both were involved.

The Sudan and Sahara

In this area, although most of the skeletal material has been assessed as Negroid, there are precious few specimens. The Asselar skeleton, found without cultural associations north of the Niger Bend, used to be thought Upper Pleistocene, but is now regarded as probably Neolithic. Boule and Vallois see it as a "generalized Negro type" not identical to present-day Sudanese Negroes.⁵⁵ This statement underscores the hopelessness of attempting to project modern physical types backward very far in time, even if we were able to agree on what constitutes a type.

At Tamaya Mellet in Niger, very fragmentary remains of fifteen

⁵⁴ Briggs, "Stone Age Races," 76, and "Living Races," 14.

⁵⁵ M. Boule and H. Vallois, *Fossil Men* (New York, 1957), 432-433.

or so individuals have been assigned Negroid status.⁵⁶ At Uan Muhaggiag, in the Fezzan, the desiccated burial of a Negroid child has been radiocarbon-dated at 3500 B.C.⁵⁷ The Khartoum Mesolithic inhabitants, represented by seventeen fragmented burials, are also described as Negroid.⁵⁸ These probably date to a time around 4000 B.C., but may be earlier.

It is widely believed that the varying degrees of Negroid features in current Saharan populations go back to at least the Neolithic, although slaving in more recent times has undoubtedly contributed its share. People such as the Bella (Haratin) agriculturists may actually represent Sudanese intrusions of Neolithic date, although this is difficult to prove. The Negroid appearance of the Teda pastoralists also is hard to explain wholly in terms of slave raiding. While some of the Negroid elements may be late, this is just as true of predominantly white populations, such as the Tuareg, who reflect population displacements resulting from Arab intrusions since the eighth century.⁵⁹

I find unconvincing the commonly expressed viewpoint that, because we have no Negro skeletal remains from an early date, this variety of African must have been "the last to evolve." For one thing, this places too much emphasis upon the identification of "typical" Negroes in prehistoric horizons. For another, it tends to ignore the fact that we have no material from the West or Central African forest regions, where indigenous peoples today show the greatest clustering of traits ordinarily regarded as Negroid. Looking at the map, one can see that preserved remains of prehistoric peoples are entirely on the northern, eastern, and southern peripheries of the continent. Only the handful of Saharan and Sudanese sites just cited are exceptions, and these are clearly on the fringes of the zone where "Negroidness" is now most heavily concentrated.

East Africa

Prehistoric *sapiens* remains in East Africa are not numerous and tend to be quite localized. From a general anthropological outlook,

⁵⁶ Briggs, "Living Races," 13.

⁵⁷ F. Mori and A. Ascenzi, "La Mummia Infantile di Uan Muhaggiag," *Rivista di Antropologia*, XLV (1959), 125-148.

⁵⁸ A. J. Arkell, *Early Khartoum* (London, 1949).

⁵⁹ Briggs, "Living Races," 85.

the Stone Age material from this area is taken as support of early "Hamitic" invasions. This assumption is certainly subject to some qualification, even if direct refutation is difficult. I shall not attempt to define "Hamites" at the historical level (although this problem requires re-examination) but only to treat their presumed Stone Age predecessors.

One point to be considered is that, culturally speaking, the region as a whole is essentially part of the Stillbay-Magosian-Wilton continuum of the eastern side of the continent. The Kenya Capsian blade-and-microlithic industries are limited to the highland regions of Kenya and northern Tanzania, and the succeeding Elmenteitan assemblages are more restricted still. Only relatively minor blade increments are found in the Horn, where the Hargeisan industries of the Somali Plateau⁶⁰ may parallel the Kenya Capsian, although no real relationship can be proven. None of these industries is adequately dated; nor is there any means of determining how or if they came to East Africa either from Northwest Africa or the Near East. As Clark indicates, one cannot really say much more about them than that they, together with the Dabban blade industries of Cyrenaica, may have been part of a spread of blade traditions from the Near East at a time very close to the end of the Pleistocene.⁶¹ It is conceivable that what might have been a rather feeble intrusion of blade techniques into East Africa was reasserted and amplified in the obsidian-rich areas where the Kenya Capsian is located, simply as the result of having finer raw material admirably suited for blade and microlithic tools. Another viewpoint is that the Kenya Capsian was a purely local development. Whatever the answer, it seems unlikely that direct migrations from Asia are required to supply an explanation.

Another question to be asked is whether we have enough proof of these supposed population movements in anatomical evidence alone. Much has been made of the "Caucasoid" character of skeletal materials from Gamble's Cave, the Bromhead's Site, Naivasha,

⁶⁰ J. D. Clark, *The Prehistoric Cultures of the Horn of Africa* (Cambridge, Eng., 1954).

⁶¹ Clark, "Africa South of the Sahara," in *Courses Toward Urban Life*, ed. R. J. Braidwood & G. Willey (Chicago, 1962), 9. But the Dabban industry is now radiocarbon-dated at 38,000-31,000 B.C.

Olduvai, and certain Neolithic sites, but it seems reasonable to ask what is being implied by the use of this term. The combination of skeletal and cultural resemblances, however superficial, to material from the Mediterranean area is naturally conducive to the construction of migration theories, but clear intermediate links with either Northwest Africa or Southwest Asia do not exist. More important is the obvious fact that "Caucasoid" traits in this instance (which is rather different from the one in Northwest Africa) are seen in cranial characteristics and in nothing else. It is questionable whether we can explain "Caucasoid" features in pigmentation or facial structure of certain modern East Africans simply as the result of hybridization between Negroids and these ancient "Caucasoids," any more than we can explain in these terms the combination of Negroid and Caucasoid traits of Australian aborigines. The indications are, in the absence of sound support for extensive population movements from the eastern and western Mediterranean, that the majority of East Africans who display some morphological overlapping with whites are nonetheless African and Negroid, and there is not yet sufficient basis for the outright assumption that these so-called Proto-Hamites represent anything other than one of a number of variables among perfectly indigenous prehistoric peoples of eastern Africa. That Briggs can find his "African Mediterranean" type all the way from Morocco to South Africa only emphasizes this point.⁶² In short, skeletal material alone, in this tenuous business of reconstructing prehistoric populations, cannot always provide enough evidence. No real proof exists that either Capsian man or Capsian culture was derived from Northwest Africa or from Asia via the Horn.

If we accept the Porc Epic mandible as Neanderthaloid, there are no *sapiens* remains from the Horn (which further complicates the migration question), excepting a badly fragmented skeleton from Bur Hakaba in Somalia.⁶³ Cole's statement that "the bones were too fragmented to determine their racial type" but that the person was "almost certainly Hamitic"⁶⁴ is self-contradictory, and another example of the tenacity with which the Hamitic theory is embraced.

⁶² Briggs, "Stone Age Races."

⁶³ Clark, *Prehistoric Cultures*.

⁶⁴ S. Cole, *The Prehistory of East Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1954), 104.

Leakey has described most of the Kenya material in some detail.⁶⁵ Briefly, his five skeletons from Gamble's Cave are all thought to have been associated with the Upper Kenya Capsian C, which he believes to be of Upper Pleistocene date (the presence of pottery in the earlier A-B levels, among other things, gives us some reason to doubt this). These people were long-headed, narrow-faced individuals with prominent chins and nasal bones, who, as I have said, are considered to be the prototypes of the hypothetical East African "Caucasoid stock." The Naivasha Railway skeleton found in 1940 and the Olduvai skeleton recovered by Reck in 1913 are regarded as comparable types.

The succeeding Elmenteitan people, known from burials at the Bromhead's Site, Nakuru, combine two types—the presumably earlier Capsian one and a broader-headed one that appears to be "reminiscent" of the "Proto-Bushmen" of South Africa.⁶⁶ This dual pattern of morphology is continued into the early Neolithic at Hyrax Hill. Ultra-dolichocephalic individuals are said to have been more characteristic in the later (Gumban A) Neolithic at Willey's Kopje and Makalia, but the brachycephalic strain reappears again at Njoro River Cave, the only dated site (ca. 970 B.C.).⁶⁷ More Bush-like in appearance are skeletons from Wilton C shell middens on Lake Victoria, which are complemented by the Singa skull found near the Blue Nile in Sudan,⁶⁸ although this may be of Upper Pleistocene date.

While there possibly was a limited extension of Mediterranean-related populations into the East African highlands, this requires further investigation. Also, until we have some absolute dates, we cannot determine its antiquity with any degree of certainty. Still further extensions of such peoples southward into the Rhodesias and South Africa are even more dubious and cannot be proven on the basis of physical, cultural, or linguistic evidence now at our disposal.

In Northwest Africa, it can be argued on cultural, ecological, and

⁶⁵ L. S. B. Leaky, *Stone Age Races of Kenya* (London, 1935), *passim*.

⁶⁶ Cole, *Prehistory of East Africa*, 102.

⁶⁷ L. S. B. Leaky, *Excavations at the Njoro River Cave* (Oxford, 1950), *passim*.

⁶⁸ L. H. Wells, "The Fossil Human Skull from Singa," in *Fossil Mammals of Africa*, no. 2 (London, 1951), *passim*.

physical grounds that post-Pleistocene Stone Age populations probably were, to a large extent, part of a western Mediterranean continuum. Although Briggs's morphological series is too elaborate for the data on which it is based, it is likely that Oranians and Capsians as a whole were more Caucasoid than Negroid. Farther south, into the Sahara and Sudan, it is possible that Negroid peoples played a larger role, although the evidence is still fragmentary. It is clear that we cannot offhandedly assume Negroid populations to have been latecomers, since the critical forest areas are all but unknown in this respect.

Regarding East African "Caucasoids," there seems to be no real means of settling the issue at present, but it can be said that proof of such intrusions is scarcely convincing and that these long-headed, long-faced people may well have been more closely related to modern Nilotic peoples than to Hamitic ones, real or imagined. To find this kind of continuity between the southeastern Sudan and the East African highlands would be less demanding with respect to geographic considerations as well as others (such as the presence of Masai and other Nilotes in East Africa).

3. CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

Congo Basin

The greatest gap in the prehistoric record is the total absence of any material that can be definitely linked to the Pygmies. Their historical distribution from the Cameroons and Gabon over the Rwanda, and even down as far as the lake country of Zambia,⁶⁹ suggests they must have played a major role in the Central African Stone Age. Murdock's attempt to identify them with the Upper Pleistocene Sangoan and Lupemban industries of the forest zone is interesting,⁷⁰ but there is nothing to substantiate it (especially since there is reason to think that Negroes were also associated with this forest area). The sole skeletal remains from the whole region are two mandibles and a few cranial and jaw fragments which de Heinzelin recovered from the Ishango shell middens on Lake Edward (ca. 6500-6000 B.C.). These are described by Twiesselman,

⁶⁹ J. D. Clark, "A Note on the Pre-Bantu Inhabitants of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland," *Northern Rhodesia Journal*, I (1950), 42-52.

⁷⁰ Murdock, *Africa*, 48.

who seems to conclude from this unsatisfactory sample that the inhabitants were more Bushmanoid or Negroid than Pygmoid.⁷¹ Two partial crania from Chipongwe, near Lusaka, Zambia, have been described by Toerien as having Pygmoid affinities, but they appear to have as many or more Bush characteristics.⁷² The high cranial index of Chipongwe I and the prognathism of Chipongwe II are not traits limited to Pygmies. These remains are likely to be of Iron Age date, even though associated with a stone-tool industry.

The origin of the Pygmies can only be a matter for speculation at this time, since we know nothing of them except in an ethnographic sense. Toerien explains them as Bush-Negro hybrids, on the basis of his studies of mixed populations in South Africa.⁷³ Coon, on the other hand, believes Negroes arose through "a backcross between an original proto-Negro stock and Pygmies."⁷⁴ Clearly both cannot be right. Nor do we know much more about their relationships with Negritos in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, who have been alternatively viewed as descendants and ancestors of the African Negritos. It has been argued that African and Asian Negritos could not derive from the same ancestry because of differences in their blood-group frequencies. Congo Pygmies are high in R_0 (0.63), whereas it is almost absent in Asia; r (cde, or Rh-) is relatively high in African Pygmies (0.101) and lacking in Asian Negritos; M and N are represented in about equal proportions among pygmies but differ sharply in Asian Negritos; and R_1 , which is extremely common in the Pacific groups (0.85 to 0.92) is low (0.074) in the Congo.⁷⁵ However, it is doubtful whether these distinctions are altogether meaningful. Assuming any possible connection to be of some antiquity, differential selection, gene drift, or gene flow could account for the differences. Where the African and Asian Negritos do vary is in the same direction as the other populations in their

⁷¹ F. Twiesselmann, "Les Ossements Humains, Site Mésolithique d'Ishango," *Exploration du Parc National Albert*, V, no. 5 (1958), *passim*.

⁷² J. D. Clark and M. J. Toerien, "Human Skeletal and Cultural Material from a Deep Cave at Chipongwe, Northern Rhodesia," *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, X (1955), 107-116.

⁷³ M. J. Toerien, "Bush-Bantu Hybrids and Central African Pygmies," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 57 (1961), 215-217.

⁷⁴ Coon, *Origin of Races*, 655.

⁷⁵ Boyd, "Four Achievements," 250.

respective areas. This is not to say that all Negritos have a common origin, but simply that the genetic proof advanced against it is insufficient. Perhaps a more fruitful approach would be an ecological one, as expressed in the suggestion that the physical characteristics of present-day Negritos reflect adaptation to phosphorus- and calcium-deficient soils in the equatorial forest zone.⁷⁶

Southern Africa

The remainder of the continent, from the Rhodesias down to the Cape, appears to have been dominated by Bush-Hottentot peoples and their progenitors prior to the Iron Age, which began only about the time of Christ and later. The consensus of opinion today is that the Bushmen, if not the Hottentots, originated in southern Africa and not in the northern part of the continent, as Schapera, Coon, and others have contended. The former view accords with almost all of the evidence at our disposal, not only that from archaeology and paleontology but also as seen in modern population distributions.

Tobias believes the Bush-Hottentot group (or groups) to have developed out of a "gerontomorphic" fossil line represented by the Broken Hill and Saldanha skulls,⁷⁷ but it is probably futile to speculate on the actual relationships of these or the Florisbad specimen to later peoples.⁷⁸ Wells has summarized the chronological state of affairs relating to men of the South African Middle Stone Age (final Upper Pleistocene) and reaches the conclusion that few if any known specimens are really that early.⁷⁹ The Florisbad skull fragments from the Orange Free State may be Middle Stone Age or possibly earlier;⁸⁰ on the other hand, they may be a more recent

⁷⁶ M. T. Newman, "Ecology and Nutritional Stress in Man," *American Anthropologist*, no. 64 (1962), 22-23.

⁷⁷ P. V. Tobias, "Some Developments in South African Physical Anthropology," in Galloway, *The Skeletal Remains of Bambandyanalo* (Johannesburg, 1959), 43.

⁷⁸ R. Singer, "The Future of Physical Anthropology in South Africa," *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, no. 17 (1962), 209.

⁷⁹ L. H. Wells, "The Problem of Middle Stone Age Man in Southern Africa," *Man*, no. 59 (1959), 244.

⁸⁰ R. Singer and J. R. Crawford, "Archaeological Discoveries at Hopefield," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 88 (1958), 11-19.

intrusion. There has never been agreement as to how the Florisbad skull relates to its presumed contemporaries. Boule and Vallois treat it as fully *sapiens*;⁸¹ others have regarded it as a close relative of Broken Hill or, conversely, as a quite distinct, though chronologically equivalent, pre-*sapiens* type. Radiocarbon dates of 37,000 years and more are felt to be excessively high as the result of contamination from Palaeozoic carbon derived from formations underlying the mineral springs in which the skull was found.⁸²

The Boskop skullcap from the Potchefstroom district of the Transvaal has also been termed Middle Stone Age,⁸³ although there is no proof of this other than a single instrument of the Middle Stone Age type found nearby.⁸⁴ This fragmentary cranial specimen has been regarded as an ancestor of the Bushman and has given rise to the concept of a "Boskopoid race."

The Tuinplaats (Springbok Flats) skull from north of Pretoria, first described by Broom, may belong to the later part of the Middle Stone Age.⁸⁵ Some have compared this with the East African "Caucasoids" and thus make him the earliest of the South African "Hamites."⁸⁶

Near Cape Town there were found two other skulls previously given a Middle Stone Age date. Both are now placed in the post-Pleistocene period. The Cape Flats (Philippi) cranium⁸⁷ is probably Later Stone Age, according to its high nitrogen content. Drennan called this "Australoid"; Singer feels it combines Negroid and Hottentot features.⁸⁸ The Fish Hoek skull from Skildergat is probably

⁸¹ Boule and Vallois, *Fossil Men*, 462.

⁸² K. P. Oakley, "The Dating of the Broken Hill, Florisbad, and Saldanha Skulls," *Proceedings of the Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory* (London, 1957), 78.

⁸³ S. H. Haughton, "Preliminary Note on the Ancient Human Skull Remains from the Transvaal," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, VI (1917), 1-10.

⁸⁴ C. van Riet Lowe, "An Artefact Recovered with the Boskop Calvaria," *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, IX (1954), 135-137.

⁸⁵ R. Broom, "The Transvaal Fossil Human Skeleton," *Nature*, no. 123 (1929), 415-416.

⁸⁶ Clark, *Prehistory of Southern Africa*, 92.

⁸⁷ M. R. Drennan, "An Australoid Skull from the Cape Flats," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 59 (1929), 417-427.

⁸⁸ Singer, "Boskop."

of Magosian date (early post-Pleistocene) and has usually been aligned with the Bush-Hottentot group in one way or another.⁸⁹

The six Zitzikama crania⁹⁰ from the Cape Coast west of Port Elizabeth are no longer regarded as Middle Stone Age and in fact are felt to be undatable. These have been included in the Boskopoid category and should be interpreted as Bush-Hottentot, inasmuch as Boskopoids fall in that range.⁹¹

The Ingwavuma, or Border Cave, skull from the Zululand-Swaziland border is unlikely to be earlier than Magosian.⁹² Briggs and others have seen in it resemblances to his "African Mediterraneans," but Wells does not agree with this.⁹³

Among the better-known and larger series of skeletal material are those from Matjes River Rock Shelter and the Oakhurst Shelter on the Cape coast. The Matjes River collection includes thirteen skeletons from three distinct cultural levels.⁹⁴ The earliest of these levels, formerly thought to be Middle Stone Age, is now interpreted as Smithfield A (early Later Stone Age). Radiocarbon dates for this horizon are surprisingly high—8550 and 9300 B.C.—and would align it with the Magosian elsewhere (ca. 10,000–6000 B.C.). While crania from this and the third level are essentially Bush in character, those from the second level have been compared both with Hottentots and with Leakey's East African Caucasoids. These constitute Meiring's "Wilton race," since the cultural deposits belonged to this phase of the Later Stone Age. Radiocarbon dates for this second, or Wilton, level are 3450 and 5765 B.C. The third level, which has been assigned to Smithfield B, has no C-14 dates. The value of this

⁸⁹ J. A. Keen, "Report on a Skeleton from the Fish Hoek Cave," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 38 (1942), 301-309.

⁹⁰ H. S. Gear, "A Further Report on the Boskopoid Remains from Zitzikama," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 23 (1926), 923-934.

⁹¹ Singer, "Boskop."

⁹² H. B. S. Cooke, B. Malan, and L. H. Wells, "Fossil Man in the Lebombo Mountains, South Africa. The 'Border Cave,' Ingwavuma District, Zululand," *Man*, no. 45 (1945), 3.

⁹³ Briggs, "Stone Age Races," 65; Wells, "Late Stone Age," 184.

⁹⁴ A. J. D. Meiring, "The Wilton Skulls of the Matjes River Shelter," *Soologische Navorsing, Nasional Museum Bloemfontein*, no. 1 (1937), 51-93; A. Keith, "A Descriptive Account of the Human Skulls from Matjes River Cave, Cape Province," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, no. 21(2) (1934); Lowe, "Artefact Recovered," 135-137.

assemblage of skeletal remains has been diminished through poor excavation and inadequate publication.

The Plettenberg Bay skull, regarded by Tobias as a Later Stone Age "Boskopoid,"⁹⁵ was found about four miles away from the Matjes River site and fits into the general pattern of morphology seen at the Matjes Shelter; it compares favorably with Bush-Hottentot crania collected from the same area.⁹⁶ The Oakhurst Shelter, in contrast to the Matjes River site, was well excavated by the late A. J. H. Goodwin, and Drennan describes the skeletal material in considerable detail.⁹⁷ The Oakhurst occupants were also associated with Smithfield and Wilton industries and have been likened by some to the Wilton people at Matjes River. Drennan regards both as Hottentot. The males conform with Hottentots in the size and shape of their skulls; the females are somewhat more Bush-like in appearance (five males and four females provided most of the comparative evidence on adult morphology).

Moving beyond the frontiers of South Africa, the amount of data falls off radically. Nothing whatever has come to light in Angola, Southwest Africa, or Mozambique. Elsewhere I have briefly summarized the materials of the Central African Later Stone Age and will make only a few comments here.⁹⁸ The total Central African sample is concentrated in the southern part of Zambia, and since 1960 at least three quarters of these remains have been recovered from two adjacent sites at Lochinvar in the central Kafue River Basin. A single skull (no. 7418) from Inyanga in Southern Rhodesia⁹⁹ and two skeletons from Hora Mountain in northern Malawi,¹⁰⁰ associated with a Nachikufan Later Stone Age industry, are the only human remains found thus far outside Zambia. Only

⁹⁵ P. V. Tobias, "Physical Anthropology and Somatic Origins of the Hottentot," *African Studies*, 14 (1955), 1-22.

⁹⁶ Singer, "Boskop," 4.

⁹⁷ A. J. H. Goodwin, "The Archaeology of Oakhurst Shelter, George," *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Africa*, no. 25 (1938), 229-334; M. R. Drennan, "The Cave Dwellers and Children of the Cave Dwellers," in *ibid.*, 259-293.

⁹⁸ C. Gabel, "Further Human Remains from the Central African Later Stone Age," *Man*, no. 63 (1963), 44.

⁹⁹ P. V. Tobias, "Skeletal Remains from Inyanga," in *Inyanga*, ed. R. Summers (Cambridge, Eng., 1958), appendix.

¹⁰⁰ Wells, "Late Stone Age," 183-185.

one site in the whole group has been dated by radiocarbon, and this is the one containing the largest number of usable specimens: Gwisho A at Lochinvar, with dates ranging from 2750-2300 B.C. The Maramba skeleton and Mumbwa skulls IV.1 and IV.2 may possibly be Middle Stone Age; the remainder are clearly Later Stone Age. Virtually all are allied to the Bush-Hottentot group, and all with clear cultural associations, except the Hora Mountain skeletons, are Wilton. Toerien, as we have seen, sees some Pygmoid traits in the Chipongwe material, and Wells has claimed Caucasoid status for Mumbwa skull IV.3 and at least one of the Hora Mountain skeletons.¹⁰¹

Below is a list of published Central African Later Stone Age materials.¹⁰²

Name	Location	Original description
Chipongwe	Lusaka, Zambia	Bushmanoid, with some Pygmoid traits. 2 partial crania.
Gwisho A	Lochinvar, Zambia	Bushmanoid. 14 skeletons; 6 crania suitable for analysis.
Hora Mountain	northern Malawi	Bushmanoid, with some possibly Negroid and Erythriote traits. 2 skeletons.
Inyanga	Inyanga Ruins, eastern Rhodesia	Bushmanoid, possibly with some Negroid and Boskopoid traits. 1 skull.
Leopard's Hill	Lusaka, Zambia	Bushmanoid. 1 occipital fragment.
Maramba	Livingstone, Zambia	Bushmanoid. 1 incomplete skeleton.

¹⁰¹ L. H. Wells, "Fossil Man in Northern Rhodesia," appendix in Clark, *Stone Age Cultures of Northern Rhodesia* (Claremont, 1950); Wells, "Late Stone Age."

¹⁰² T. R. Jones, "Human Skeletal Remains from the Mumbwa Cave, Northern Rhodesia," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 37 (1940), 313-319; Wells, *Fossil Man*, and "Late Stone Age"; Clark and Toerien, "Human Skeletal and Cultural Material"; Tobias, "Skeletal Remains"; Gabel, "Human Crania from the Later Stone Age of the Central Kafue Basin, Northern Rhodesia," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 58 (1962), 307-314.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Original description</i>
Mumbwa Caves	Mumbwa, Zambia	Bushmanoid, except IV.3 (said to be related to the East African Caucasoids). 3 partial crania and fragmented remains of a dozen or so other individuals.

In addition, the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum has recovered twenty burials from the Gwisho B site at Lochinvar, no more than a few hundred yards from the site now known as Gwisho A and excavated by me in 1960-1961. These new remains are reported to be predominantly Bushmanoid, although they have yet to be studied in detail.¹⁰³

While the southern and south central parts of the continent have yielded more human remains up to this point than the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the samples are small and do not represent the entire area. Yet the similarity of most of the material to Bush and Hottentot populations of South Africa is inescapable. It has been argued that certain specimens—Tuinplaats, Border Cave, Mumbwa IV.3, Hora Mountain—are ancient "Caucasoids" reflecting migrations of East African "Hamites" and, further, that peoples such as the Kakamas Hottentots and Herero are modern survivals of these hypothetical migrations. Others, such as Cape Flats and occasionally even Florisbad, have been called "Australoids," and Broom described the Korana Hottentots as Australoids also.¹⁰⁴ More robust Bush-like examples that do not show the same amount of "pedomorphism" as modern Bushmen have often been lumped together in the "Boskopoid" group. Singer, in attacking the concept of a Boskopoid race, has made some observations that can apply to the acceptance of any of these exotic racial elements in the Stone Age of southern Africa.¹⁰⁵ An essential precondition for assessing these,

¹⁰³ B. Fagan, personal communication.

¹⁰⁴ R. Broom, "A Contribution to the Craniology of the Yellow-Skinned Races of South Africa," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 53 (1923), 132-149.

¹⁰⁵ Singer, "Boskop," *passim*.

as he points out, is determination of the amount of variability among recent Bush and Hottentot peoples. It is shown that, on the basis of our current knowledge, "Boskopoid" and "Australoid" crania fit well within the Bush-Hottentot range of variation; probably the same can be said of the "Hamitic" inhabitants. Singer notes that when these supposedly non-Bush-Hottentot skulls have been found with others, the latter are usually Bush-Hottentot. This in itself throws some suspicion on contrary placement of the exceptions, and as long as they can be fitted into the Bush-Hottentot range there seems little reason to treat them otherwise.

Acceptance of these skeletal remains as representative of anything apart from Bush-Hottentot is necessarily contingent upon the origins and relationships of the Hottentots, who have been cited in whole or in part as a variant of the Bush group, as "Hamites," and as "Australoids." Presumably the first designation acknowledges a South African origin. As Hamites, the Hottentots are visualized as East African immigrants or hybrids resulting from such a population movement. As Australoids, they might be seen as an indigenous but essentially non-Bushmanoid group. This last possibility probably need not concern us greatly, since rather few specialists have ever wholeheartedly espoused the Australoid cause. The second alternative, however, cannot be ignored. Part of the apparent support for this view is linguistic and cultural evidence, which unfortunately is not always used with proper discretion. The linguistic support is actually nonexistent; the Hottentots are Khoisan, not Hamitic, as some maintain. Nor is their speech a special branch of Khoisan, for the division of Khoisan into northern, central, and southern sub-families cuts across both Bush and Hottentot populations.¹⁰⁶ It would be difficult also to imagine a technologically more advanced group of people, in this instance "Hamitic" cattleherders, adopting the languages of resident hunter-gatherers. The fact that the Hottentots had cattle and fat-tailed sheep does not necessarily make them East African "Caucasoids" either, since we do not know when they became pastoralists and have little reason to assume that this change in subsistence pattern was the result of migration rather than diffusion. There is no reason, for example, why these animals could not have been obtained from early Bantu-speaking neighbors. Such

¹⁰⁶ Greenberg, "Languages of Africa," 44.

cultural traits as stone bowls in Southwest Africa, and Nama pottery reminiscent of the East African Neolithic, may indicate contact toward the northeast, but not necessarily migration. On the other side of the ledger, the presence of Bushman-like remains at Singa and Lake Victoria, the continuation of Magosian and Wilton industries as far as the Horn, the Bush-like Nebarara skull from Tanzania,¹⁰⁷ and the Hadza and Sandawe of Tanzania with their physical, cultural, and linguistic similarities to the Bushmen,¹⁰⁸ strongly suggest major Bush-Hottentot occupations of East Africa. (With this evidence, incidentally, one might just as well conclude that the Kenya "Proto-Hamites" were also Hottentots and simply a Bushmanoid variant in an area settled mostly by Bushmen.)

Particularly in view of the "robust Bushmanoid" characteristics of most Stone Age skeletal remains in southern Africa, there seems every reason to see the historical Hottentots as a local development in that part of the continent. The Hottentot groups, however variable, do show resemblances to the Bushmen. Keen and others have outlined the similarities and differences between the two populations, the differences being primarily in the greater length, higher cephalic index, and longer face of the Hottentot.¹⁰⁹ Comparing figures given by Keen for 205 Bush and Hottentot skulls with those for two of the largest and most widely separated Stone Age samples,¹¹⁰ Oakhurst,¹¹¹ and Gwisho A,¹¹² shows clearly that all basic cranial and facial measurements and indices are in close agreement. The Oakhurst and Lochinvar skulls, from an osteometric viewpoint, not only fall within the Bush-Hottentot range but are close to the

¹⁰⁷ A. Galloway, "The Nebarara Skull," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 30 (1933), 585-596.

¹⁰⁸ J. C. Trevor, "The Physical Characteristics of the Sandawe," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 77 (1947), 61-80; Greenberg, "Languages of Africa," 72-73.

¹⁰⁹ J. A. Keen, "A Statistical Study of the Differences between Bantu, Hottentot and Bushman Skulls," *Sociologische Navorsing, Nasional Museum Bloemfontein*, I (1947), 191-199; J. A. Keen, "Cranimetric Survey of the South African Museum Collection of Bushman, Hottentot and Bush-Hottentot Hybrid Skulls," *Annals of the South African Museum*, no. 37 (1952), 212-226.

¹¹⁰ See Table 1, in Keen, "Cranimetric Survey."

¹¹¹ See Table 3, in Drennan, "Cave Dwellers."

¹¹² See Table 1, in Gabel, "Human Crania."

median part of it. It may be noted also that some individuals in each of the two prehistoric groups, especially the females, appear more Bushman-like, while others are closer to the Hottentots.

Looking at the skeletal material from the Bushman side, it is quite obvious that the modern Bushman is not well represented even as late as the earlier part of the Later Stone Age, when a larger body type as well as bigger faces and heads still seem to have prevailed. Some of the earlier men are therefore closer to modern Hottentots than to the Bushman in cranial and facial features. It is judged that the smaller, modern Bushman is a relatively recent development. The explanation for this change has not been determined. It would be tempting to interpret it as a response to life in the desert, with consequent cultural and biological adjustments, if we did not know this adaptation to be so recent. We might hope to learn more about it from growth studies such as Drennan was able to make on the Oakhurst people, a good proportion of whom were children from 0-7 years of age.¹¹³ Further data of this kind, combined with biological surveys of existing Bushmen¹¹⁴ and archaeological studies of technology, subsistence, and social organization among their predecessors, could lead to a much better understanding of the end products as seen skeletally or in the flesh.

At present, one can only observe that pre-Iron Age populations of southern Africa were overwhelmingly Bush-Hottentot and that, if there were Negro or "Caucasoid" contributions during the Stone Age, we have yet to demonstrate this with any degree of certainty. Furthermore, there is a distinct difference if we judge these additions to have been made some thousands of years before Christ (as would be the case with Tuinplaats or Border Cave) or at 1400-1600 A.D. It must be admitted that stone bowls, East African ceramic types, the Herero, hybridization between Bantu and Hottentot (or between Bushmen and "Caucasoids"), and linguistic borrowings (if any, in fact, exist) could well have been very late in date and would not disenfranchise the Hottentot as a native South African.

It is likely, therefore, that Bush-Hottentot populations predom-

¹¹³ Drennan, "Cave Dwellers."

¹¹⁴ Singer, "Biological Aspects" and "Future of Physical Anthropology"; P. V. Tobias, "Studies of Bushmen in the Kalahari," *South African Journal of Science*, no. 57 (1961), 502-506.

inated during pre-Iron Age times in southern Africa at least as far northward as Zambia. In addition, there probably were extensions of these people up into Tanzania, Kenya, and perhaps even the Horn and southeastern Sudan. The physical and cultural evidence implies considerable continuity of Stone Age populations all along the eastern side of the continent.

4. ARCHAEOLOGY AND HUMAN VARIABILITY

From the foregoing observations, it is quite clear that skeletal evidence alone contradicts the notion that the physical attributes of earlier populations must coincide with those of modern Africans, even where a genetic relationship is regarded as likely. Oranian and Capsian peoples were not identical to historical Maghrebians; the Bushman's ancestors were larger and less "infantile"; and Asselar Man was a "generalized" Negroid. This confirms the theoretical position, held by physical anthropologists for many years, that racial characteristics are not static but change through time in response to selective pressures, by mutation, and as the result of gene flow or gene drift. Where associations can be made between prehistoric and recent populations, they are bound to be somewhat vague, and this should not be a cause of concern to an extent that requires the formulation of new races or unwieldy migrations. Migration theories, in order to be taken seriously, must be based on the fullest possible documentation and not fabricated to serve as an easy means of explaining similarities and differences.

Those of us whose interests are primarily archaeological can be of help not only in testing migration hypotheses but in providing background information for the spread of specific genes—especially those with known or suspected adaptive values, such as the abnormal hemoglobins—or the development of particular morphological traits. Most certainly work of this kind is in an embryonic stage, but, as archaeological techniques and interpretation improve along with those of human biology, one can see a productive future ahead. The greater concern of archaeologists at the present time for reconstructing human ecology in terms of environment, total technology (as opposed to artifact typology alone), food sources and diet,

settlement patterns, population structure, and social organization¹¹⁵ should eventually supply the physical anthropologist with much significant data for assessment of genetic and morphological variation.

Excavation of more sites like Oakhurst, with good skeletal series in clear cultural contexts, might well lead to a better understanding of growth patterns and physical makeup of local Stone Age populations. The intensive work around the Gwisho Springs at Lochinvar in the Kafue Basin will provide us with one of the most detailed pictures of Later Stone Age man in Africa. The three sites excavated thus far have been extraordinarily rich in cultural and natural-historical remains as well as having produced the largest collection of Stone Age skeletal material in Central Africa.

The framework for studying Later Stone Age populations is relatively broad, since most individual cultural traditions persevered for thousands of years. Dates for Oranian and Smithfield industries, combined with what we know of their late survivals, suggest a time span of around 10,000 years, or something on the order of four hundred generations. The Tshitolian industries of Equatoria go back to about 10,000 B.C. and must have persisted in some areas until very late. Radiocarbon dating shows that the Wilton and Nachikufan industries probably covered at least five to six thousand years. Thus there is no lack of time for environmental and cultural influences to have left their mark on the peoples producing these technologies. Within this framework and with proper archaeological research, we should be able to establish the probable size of local groups and the distribution of settlements, and to calculate patterns of social organization through comparison with technologically similar peoples of the historical period, so as to grasp something of population genetics in prehistory. More easily still, we should be able to pinpoint environmental factors, food habits, and technological details that might have some bearing on human physical variation.

¹¹⁵ For instance, R. J. Braidwood and C. Reed, "The Achievement and Early Consequences of Food-Production: A Consideration of the Archaeological and Natural-Historical Evidence," *Cold Spring Harbor Symposia on Quantitative Biology*, no. 22 (1957), 19-31; J. D. Clark, "Human Ecology during Pleistocene and Later Times in Africa South of the Sahara," *Current Anthropology*, I (1960), 307-324; Heizer and Cook, *Application of Quantitative Methods in Archaeology* (1960).

II

The Bornu King Lists

by

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DURING THE PREPARATION of the paper on the dynamics of feudalism in Bornu history which follows this one, I encountered the problem of the historiographic validity of traditional Kanem-Bornu king lists.¹ It was my aim to show that monarchs who obtained the throne from their own fathers ruled for longer periods than those who obtained the monarchy through nonfilial succession. Hence these different varieties of royal recruitment were counted and compared in various prior lists: first in Barth's king list, then in Urvoy's.² Differences in the predicted direction appeared in both, but only weakly in Urvoy. To maintain a conservative balance, I used the Urvoy list in presenting the material: very little is known about the validity of these king lists, and I decided to use Urvoy because his list gave the least amount of support to the hypothesis maintained in this essay. Urvoy obtained his list by collating those of Barth, Landeroin, and Palmer, while Barth gathered his material in Bornu in the 1850s. However, a question remains as to which list is more accurate, or whether greater accuracy and more historical insight can be gained by a closer scrutiny of all the Bornu king lists available in the literature.

The problem of this paper is thus a historiographic one, and by derivation a historical and anthropological one. First, can we assess the reliability of the Bornu king lists, and, second, can these be made to yield historical information valid enough for purposes of generalization?

For purposes of analysis, I decided to enter all the kings men-

¹ This essay and the one which follows owe much to discussions with Daniel McCall and to the assistance of Helgi Osterreich who drew up the composite table of king lists. Raoul Naroll, Fred Voget, Norman Chance, and Robert Hess made valuable comments and suggestions, and Jeffrey Butler edited the final draft.

² H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa* (London, 1857); Y. Urvoy, "Chronologie du Bornou," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, XI (1941), 21-32.

tioned by all authors on a unified table. At the same time, genealogical charts of the major lists were constructed so that diagrammatic representation of discrepancies and agreements could be more easily observed in the lineage segments.³ In addition, I examined the means by which the various authors had collected their information. Finally, I constructed my own king list from the composite table of information about the major lists available in print, and attempted some analysis and generalization.

1. THE SOURCES

As in other parts of Africa, and indeed in other parts of the world, in Bornu the lineage history of the monarchy was considered the responsibility of specialists, who were usually in the entourage of the king. Court scribes under the Kanem-Bornu monarchy wrote this history out in Arabic script, and praise-singers passed it on orally from father to son and from master to apprentice. Written historical documents are referred to in the literature as *diwan* and oral traditions as *girgam*. In the country itself I found only a few people who used any single word other than *girgam* to describe all historical information, which may reflect the fact that court historians are not as important or as recognized a group today as they were traditionally. The Kanuri have a reverence for written documents and keep them for long periods. Thus I met peasants who had somehow or other managed to keep court-fine receipts for ten years. Sacred and valuable documents are held by the heads of households and recopied when they are in danger of being lost. It is by this copying technique that Kanuri written records going back to at least the sixteenth century and perhaps beyond have been carried down to the present day. Having given little systematic attention to this subject when in the field, I can only say that it is my impression that (1) there are manuscript records in Bornu that have not yet been gathered, and (2) there is very little, if any, recopying of these documents going on today.

The various European sources of the Bornu king lists span nearly a hundred years, but they are only partially independent of one

³ These turned out to be less useful than expected because the entire list was too bulky. When diagrammatic representation was required, I simply made sketches of that section of a king list under study at the time.

another, except for Barth, of course, who had no earlier work by an outsider to compare with his own.⁴ Barth visited Bornu in the early 1850s, Nachtigal in the late 1870s, Landeroin came with the Tilho expedition in 1906, and Palmer collected his material over a period of twenty-six years up to 1930. Later in the 1930s and 1940s Urvoy started to work on Bornu history and published a list of his own in 1941. No one of these authors completely agrees with any other. Although Urvoy's list does result in part from his study of previous lists, it is considered independently here because Urvoy made judgments about the materials based on his own studies in Kanem-Bornu history.

The ever-careful Barth devotes an entire chapter to the validity of his historical materials, as he rather ponderously says, "to contend against the strong prejudices of numerous critics who are accustomed to refuse to believe whatever is incapable of bearing the strictest enquiry."⁵ His main source is a chronicle or *diwan* that related the entire history of Kanem-Bornu from its earliest beginnings to the end of the Magumi Sefuwa dynasty. He reports that this is supposed to be an abridgment of a much larger work that never appeared, and that various parts of it are said to have been composed at different times.⁶ Barth notes that, from Imam Ahmed's work in the latter part of the sixteenth century,⁷ it is evident that no written documents existed before the reign of Idris Katakarmabi (first half of the sixteenth century). The oldest Kanuri author of a written history mentioned is Masfarma Omar ben Othman, who wrote a history of Idris Katakarmabi's reign.⁸ In other words, Barth felt that Kanem history was in the oral tradition and always had been. This must not be taken to mean that the people of Kanem-Bornu had no knowledge of writing before the sixteenth century. Arabic sources reveal a letter from Bornu, written shortly after the Magumi had left Kanem, addressed to the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt

⁴ Barth, *Travels*, II, chap. 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁷ Later presented by Palmer: H. R. Palmer, *History of the First Twelve Years of the Reign of Mai Idris Alooma of Bornu (1571-1583)*, by Imam Ahmed ibn Fartua (Lagos, 1926).

⁸ Barth, *Travels*, 256.

in 784 A.H. (1392 A.D.), and asking for help against Arab slave raiders in Bornu.⁹

However, whether or not there were written history or documents before the beginning of the sixteenth century, Barth was deeply impressed and elated by the very high correspondence between the pre-sixteenth-century king list in the *diwan* and the list given by Imam Ahmed, court historian to Idris Alooma, for his monarch's own genealogy. Barth also had two other short chronicles (*diwan*) that varied greatly from the longer one. These he judged to be unworthy of attention except with regard to the fifty-ninth king on his list, whose "well established reign" he added to his other information.¹⁰ By "well established" Barth meant that it was present in the oral tradition and was part of the lore of interested court officials with whom he could discuss the matter in Kanuri. Barth of course also used any outside source he could and mentions specifically Ibn Said (1282 A.D.), Ibn Batuta (1353), Ibn Khaldun (1385), Makrizi (1400), Leo Africanus (1528), and a document published in Paris in 1849 concerning embassies established in Tripoli by Bornu monarchs.¹¹

In order to obtain his chronology, Barth took the best estimates of the documents on the length of reign for each ruler and counted backwards from the death of Dunama in 1818. He then checked his dates with the few absolute dates found in Arabic writing and found a striking correspondence between Bornu traditions and information given by Arabic writers. For example, he studied a listing of Kanem monarchs given in Makrizi, then compared dates, names, and the order of succession. He found that, with the exception of a "slight discrepancy in the order of succession of the later kings, whose reign was of very short duration," there was a "surprising harmony" between his own material gathered in Bornu and that of Makrizi, who had obtained his information much earlier and most probably from merchants or pilgrims passing through Egypt.¹²

Several decades after Barth, in the early 1870s, Nachtigal visited

⁹ The letter is given in English in H. R. Palmer, *Bornu, Sahara and Sudan* (London, 1936), 218.

¹⁰ Barth, *Travels*, 258.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹² *Ibid.*, 264.

Bornu. His host was Ahmed Ibn Brahim, a courtier of Shehu Omar. Omar ordered Ahmed to seek out historical documents and make them available to Nachtigal, who worked out his king list on this basis, although he reminded his readers that his material was not of very great accuracy.¹³ This was his own view, and it is especially true of all the kings on his list before his twenty-eighth, for whom he could obtain no proper dates. It is difficult to know what weight to put on Nachtigal's assessment of his own work as inaccurate. It could have been the result of his understanding of the methods by which it was obtained or its lack of agreement with Barth's material, which he published with his own for comparative purposes, or a combination of the two. Actually, its partial independence from other works makes it valuable since it adds weight to correspondences when these occur and makes us ask questions when there is lack of agreement.

Just after the turn of the century, Landeroin accompanied the Tilho expedition to the Chad basin and recorded a wide variety of ethnological and historical material. His own compilation of the political history of nineteenth-century Bornu is quite extensive, an invaluable source for anyone interested in this period of Kanuri history.

Landeroin made no attempt to combine the various sources already available, although he allowed the reader to compare his material with that of previous workers. During his stay in the area he obtained a document purporting to give the entire Bornu king list, plus all principal events of world history from its creation up to the inception of the first Kanem-Bornu dynasty. He had this document translated (into French), and his published king list was taken directly from it. He made very little comment one way or another about the accuracy of the material, being content merely to present it. Landeroin suggested that his document was first written sometime near the beginning of the seventeenth century,¹⁴ but

¹³ G. Nachtigal, *Sahara und Sudan* (Berlin, 1881), II, 392.

¹⁴ Landeroin, "Du Tchad au Niger. Notes Historiques," in Tilho, *Documents Scientifiques de la Mission Tilho*, II (Paris, 1911), 342. Landeroin quotes the document as saying that there are 1080 years from Jesus to Mohammed, and 600 years since that time or 1630 years in all. In a footnote on the same page he then corrects this by suggesting that there may be 622 Gregorian years

after a number of futile attempts I had to abandon any attempt to follow his reasoning on this point. Since the list ends with a first dynasty king who reigned around 1812, it seems obvious that, whether or not the document was in fact first committed to writing in 1600, it has been added to since.

In order to obtain his dates, Landeroin counted backwards from 1900, after adding the known dates to the second Bornu dynasty. According to his account, elder informants in Bornu could not remember very clearly beyond the founding of the second dynasty at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It should be noted that Landeroin's ability or inability to date exactly when this document was first committed to writing could have no clear relation to the reliability of the document itself. That particular difficulty was one of interpretation, whereas errors in the documentary material itself would have been based on faulty translation into French or on faulty recital of the king list—their lengths of reign, the royal parentage, or the order of kingly succession; the author made no specific mention of these points.

Palmer was a British colonial official in northern Nigeria who collected historical documents and oral traditions from 1904 to 1930. In his own words, his work represents "a conspectus of widely held Sudanese beliefs about the past, viewed in the light of relevant data and a historical perspective . . . inaccessible to Sudanese erudition."¹⁵ Palmer used much of the same material as Barth and translated it along with other documentation that he discovered and published in his *Sudanese Memoirs*¹⁶ and his later work, *Bornu, Sahara and Sudan*. I have used the list published in his later work, since he added to earlier material in this publication. Palmer translated from the Arabic and published Barth's *diwan* of Bornu,¹⁷ which he copied from the original in Leipzig and checked against

and 1008 Moslem years in this calculation, and if this is so then the date should be corrected by using the formula $622 + [(1630-622) \times 32]/33$, which works out to 1599 or 1600 A.D. in round figures. This calculation was checked by the Islamic Institute, McGill University, and authorities there state they cannot recognize or follow Landeroin's reasoning on this point.

¹⁵ Palmer, *Bornu*, chap. 8.

¹⁶ H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs* (Lagos, 1926).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 96-111.

Blau's version of the same document. He compared *girgams* (oral traditions) and *mahrms* (grants of privilege given by Bornu monarchs to their subjects) against Arabic, Egyptian, and classical sources, in order to produce the revised list and historical summation that he presented as the major portion of his *Bornu, Sahara and Sudan*. In discussing this revision he claimed that it was very similar to Barth's, but more complete.¹⁸ He noted that, of all European sources, Barth's was the only one having any degree of accuracy. Nachtigal's list he branded as "very corrupt," and claimed that Landeroin's list was also suspect since he used materials taken from secondary sources written during the nineteenth century.¹⁹

As far as general validity is concerned, Palmer recognized the exceptional difficulties in writing accurate African history. He noted that in the eighteenth century, if not well before, court historians began remembering the kings in *groups* descended from one or another of the famous rulers, thus distorting the sequence and the chronology.²⁰ In other words, lineage segments tended to be bunched together in the oral traditions, and this must have had a continuous smoothing or leveling effect on king-list material that otherwise would reflect interlineage competition and conflict for the throne. Because of such errors, Palmer admitted that he was dealing with a tangled skein that must always involve some error. However, since he was fairly sure that he had some documents written at earlier times (for instance, Imam Ahmed's work for the latter sixteenth century), and corroboration from Arabic historians, he felt justified in claiming a high degree of accuracy for his material.

Parenthetically, two comments should be made about Palmer's work. First, Palmer has had a very strong influence on the older men in Bornu who are interested in oral traditions. Indeed, my own copy of *Bornu, Sahara and Sudan* was obtained from a district head's follower in rural Bornu. Others in the capital told me that Palmer was the man to consult if I wanted to know anything about Kanuri history. This means that the oral traditions have been

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

affected by the work of Palmer, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to discover the exact nature of these distortions. Second, Palmer's philological reasoning, and the myriad of classical references he used, make his works very difficult reading. However, he collected a large amount of primary material that should now be given more careful study.

In the late 1930s and the 1940s, the French historian Urvoy worked steadily through a large mass of the historical materials of the western Sudan, especially those concerned with the history of Kanem-Bornu. In 1941 he considered all the Bornu king lists and published a revision based on his own work.²¹ He used various Arabic sources, the works of Imam Ahmed (the sixteenth-century Kanuri historian),²² *mahrams*, and *girgams* published in Palmer's works.²³ He also used the Barth, Nachtigal and Landeroin king lists in his attempt to come up with an improved synthesis. He noted that the greatest difficulty in historical reliability came in the period between the mid-thirteenth and the early sixteenth century. For this period there is much disagreement among the sources. Urvoy explained it to some extent by claiming that many of the names had been changed for this period. However, he felt that the agreement between the *diwan* of Barth and the work of Imam Ahmed was sufficient ground for using Barth over any other source. Urvoy noted that, in both Nachtigal and Landeroin, all members of a collateral line of siblings tended to be set down in royal succession, then those of another branch line, then another, and so on.²⁴ On the other hand, in Barth's list there is a good deal of alternation in the succession between various lineage segments. He concluded from these differences that Barth's greater lack of pattern was closer to the truth, while the more systematic pattern of succession in Nachtigal and Landeroin was a simplification of the actual events of dynastic history. Nevertheless, Urvoy felt that he could still make use of Landeroin, especially for dating the length of reigns.

21 Urvoy, "Chronologie." See note 2 above.

22 Palmer, *History*. See note 7 above; and Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, I.

23 Palmer, *Bornu; Sudanese Memoirs*, II, III.

24 Urvoy, "Chronologie," 25.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE LISTS

The sources do not differ appreciably in the names given to any particular king, and most of them give several names for each monarch. These generally include a Kanuri name and an Arabic one as well, although for the first twenty-one kings only seven are given Moslem names, and of these only the first two are exclusively Moslem. After the coming of Islam to the area, it may be assumed that all monarchs had a Moslem name, whether or not this name has been remembered. In a few cases the king is remembered only by some convenient appellation, such as "the great." This is because it is a traditional Kanuri practice to be known publicly by a name that reflects some quality of one's role or status, or a quality connected with the person after whom one has been named. In Bornu today, a large number of men are called *abba gana* (small father, or father's younger brother), which means that they are named after a male grandparent or their father's younger brother. More often than not it is the grandparent, and since the child's parents have a nonreciprocal name avoidance with their parent generation, they must use the circumlocution "small father" when addressing or referring to their child rather than his "real" name, which they must avoid. Similarly, in the king lists numbers twenty-three and twenty-four on Barth's list are Kanuri names that refer to sibling seniority. *Kure gana* means *kure* the younger, and *kure kura* is *kure* the elder. This also means that the throne went first to a younger, then to an elder, brother. *Kure* means "formerly" and could refer to the fact that the younger came first in the succession so that he was the "small one" (*gana*) formerly, but through prior succession he became the bigger or senior one (*kura*).

Not all the Kanuri names given in the lists have meanings that are understood at present. However, both *Sələm*²⁵ and *Dunama* are well known; *Sələm* means dark or dark-skinned, as opposed to *kime* or lighter and more reddish in color; *Dunama* means "the strong" or "the great." Both terms may refer to a quality of the person to whom it is attached, or to the person after whom they were named. It should be remembered in dealing with such lists that it is impos-

²⁵ The ə in *sələm* is phonetically similar to the oo in *look* or *book*.

sible, without other kinds of evidence, to attribute qualities given in names to the person bearing the name. One interesting paradox in these two names is the fact that in two out of three cases Sələm is coupled with the Arabic name Djilil (the magnificent), which should more logically belong with the name Dunama. The reason why this should be so is not known, although it suggests a metaphorical meaning for the word Sələm that spreads its connotations well beyond the simple translation of the word as dark or dark-skinned.

One final caution should be emphasized concerning the names on the king lists. Although there are more indigenous Kanuri names at the beginning of the lists and more Arabic names toward the end, this must not be considered anything more than a very rough measure of the spread of Islam in the area. Those remembering the king lists, many of whom spoke Arabic, could easily have ascribed Arabic names or common equivalents to earlier monarchs who, during their own lives, did not possess them.

In order to represent the various European sources comparatively, I present all the king lists together in one table. Each item in a column, except for the name, is described under a subcolumn labeled B (for Barth, 1857), P (Palmer, 1936), U (Urvoy, 1941), L (Landeroir, 1911), and N (Nachtigal, 1881). This order was chosen because on inspection it seemed to be the order of agreement. With the table it is possible to assess the exact nature of agreement and disagreement among the various historical sources. I have combined Barth and Palmer, who rarely disagree, and Nachtigal and Landeroir, since they tend to agree with one another when they disagree with the others. As a separate synthesizer, who had been working with many sources on the Sudan, Urvoy is kept separate.²⁶

Table 1 illustrates the degree of agreement or disagreement between the five king lists of Barth, Palmer, Urvoy, Landeroir, and Nachtigal. The divisions of the table are as follows: Section 1 compares the paternal lineage as given by each author; Section 2, the maternal lineage and the length of reign; and Section 3, the dates of reign for each king. In order to scan the complete data for any one king, therefore, the reader must refer first to the appropriate monarch in Section 1, then to Section 2, and finally to Section 3.

²⁶ Urvoy, "Chronologie."

THE BORNU KING LISTS OF BARTH (B), PALMER (P), URVOY (U), LANDEROIN (L), AND NACHTIGAL (N)

King	Number					Father				
	B	P	U	L	N	B	P	U	L	N
SEIF	1	1	1	1	1	Dhu Yazan	same	same	—	Hasan
IBRAHIM, BIRAM, BREM	2	2	2	2	2	Seif	same	same	same	same
DUKU, DUGU, DUNAMA (N.)	3	3	3	3	3	Ibrahim	same	same	same	same
FUNE	4	4	4	4	4	Dugu	same	same	same	Dunama
ARITSO, ARSU, HARTSO, ARJOU	5	5	5	5	5	Fune	same	same	same	same
KATURI	6	6	6	6	6	Aritso	same	same	same	same
ADYOMA, WAYAMA, BIYOMA	7	7	7	—	—	Katuri	same	same	—	—
BULU	8	8	8	7	7	Adyoma	same	same	same	same
ARKI, ARKU, ARKAMAN	9	9	9	8	8	Bulu	same	same	same	Hajoma [Adyoma]
SHU, HUWA, HOUA, SIOU	10	10	10	9	9	Arki	same	same	same	same
S ₃ L ₃ MA, DJIL, ABD EL JILIL, ABDALLAH (L.&N.)	11	11	11	10	10	Shu	same	same	Djilil	Shu
HUME, UME, UMME	12	12	12	11	11	Abd el Jelil	same	same	same	Biri
DUNAMA	13	13	13	12	12	Hume	same	same	same	same
BIRI	14	14	14	13	13	Dunama	same	same	same	same
ABD ALLAH, DALA, BEKER, BIKORU	15	15	15	14	14	Bikoru ben Biri	Biri	same	same	same

TABLE 1, Section 1 (Continued)

King	Number					Father					N
	B	P	U	L	N	B	P	U	L		
S ₃ L ₃ MA, TSILIM ABD EL JILIL	16	16	16	15	15	Bikoru	same	same	same	same	
AHMED, DUNAMA (DIBALEMI)	17	17	17	16	16	S ₃ l ₃ ma	same	same	same	same	
BIRI	—	—	—	—	17	—	—	—	—	Dunama	
KADE, KADAI, ABD EL KADIM	18	18	18	19	19	Dunama (?) ^a	—	Dunama	same	same	
BIRI, IBRAHIM(B) OTHMAN(P), KACHIM-BIRI	19	19	19	24	24	Dunama	—	Dunama or Bikoru	same	same	
DJIL, DJILIL	—	—	20	17	—	—	—	—	Dunama	—	
DIRKO-KELEM, DARIN KALOUMI	—	—	21	18	18	—	—	Dunama	same	same	
IBRAHIM NIKALE, HAJJ IBRAHIM	20	20	22	25	25	Ibrahim (Biri)	Biri	same	same	same	
ABDALLAH	21	21	23	20	20	Kade	same	same	same	same	
S ₃ L ₃ MA, TSILIM	22	22	24	23	23	Abdallah	same	same	same	same	
KURE GHANA, KORE AL SAGHIR	23	23	25	22	22	Abdallah	same	same	—	—	
KURE KURA, KORE AL KABIR	24	24	26	21	21	Abdallah	same	—	—	—	
MOHAMMED	25	25	27	—	—	Abdallah	same	same	—	—	
EDRIS, IDRIS (HAFSAMI NIGA- LEMI)	26	26	28	35	34	Nikale (Ibrahim)	Ibrahim ^b (#20)	same	same	same	

TABLE 1, Section 1 (Continued)

King	Number					Father				
	B	P	U	L	N	B	P	U	L	N
DAUD (FATIMAMI NIGALEMI)	27	27	29	27	—	Nikale (Ibrahim)	Ibrahim (#20)	same	same	—
OTHMAN, OSMAN	28	28	30	28	26	Daud	same	same	same	same
OTHMAN ABU BAKR (LIYATU)	29	—	31	—	—	Idris	—	Idris	—	—
IDRIS (SARADIMA LADAREM)	30	29	32	29	27	Daud	same	same	same	same
	—	—	33	30	28	—	—	Haritso or Daud	Daud	Hartso
DUNAMA	—	—	34	26	29	—	—	Ibrahim son of Daud	Ibrahim	Ibrahim son of Daud
OMAR, UMR	31	30	35	38	37	Idris	same	same	same	same
SAID, SAAD	32	31	36	39	38	—	Idris	—	Idris	same
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	36	35	—	—	—	Idris	same
KADE AFUNU, KADE AUJA	33	32	37	37	36	Idris	same	same	same	same
BIRI, OTHMAN(P)	34	33	38	—	—	Idris	same (#26)	same	—	—
OTHMAN (KAL- NAMA)	35	34	39	—	—	Daud	same (#27)	same	—	—
DUNAMA	36	35	40	40	39	Omar	same	same	Idris	Omar
ABDALLAH, DALA (AUJA)	37	36	41	41	40	Omar	same (#30)	same	same	same
IBRAHIM	38	37	42	—	—	Othman	same	same	—	—
KADE, KADAI	39	38	43	31	30	Othman	same (#28)	same	same	same
BIRI	—	—	—	45	44	—	—	—	Dunama	same

TABLE 1, Section 1 (Continued)

King	Number					Father				
	B	P	U	L	N	B	P	U	L	N
DUNAMA	40	39	44	46	45	Biri	Othman (Biri) (#33)	Biri	same	same
MOHAMMED AMER, MER, UMME, AMAN AMARMA, OUME	41	40	45	42	41	—	—	—	Abdallah	same
MOHAMMED	42	41	46	43	42	—	—	Othman	same	same
GHAIJI, GAJI	43	42	47	33	32	Kade	same (#38)	same	same	same
OTHMAN	44	43	48	—	—	—	—	Amarma	—	—
OMAR, UMR	45	44	49	32	31	Kade	same (#38)	same	same	same
MOHAMMED	46	45	50	44	43	Abdallah	same (#36)	same	same	same
ALI GHAIJIDENI, ALI GAJI	47	46	51	34	33	Mohammed	same (#42)	same	same	same
EDRIS KATARKA- MABI, IDRIS	48	47	52	47	46	Dunama	same (#39)	same	same	same
KATAGARMABE	49	48	53	48	47	Ali	same	same	same	—
MOHAMMED	50	49	54	49	48	Idris	same	same	same	same
ALI	51	50	55	52	51	Idris	same (#48)	same	same	same
ALI FANNAMI (Regent)	—	50A ^c	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
DUNAMA (GHAMA- RAMI)	52	51	56	50	49	Mohammed	same	same	Idris	Mohammed
ABD ALLAH, DALA, ABDALLA	53	52	57	51	50	Dunama	same	same	same	same
AISA KILI N'GIRMAMMAJ	—	52A	58	—	—	—	Mohammed (#49)	Dunama	—	—

TABLE 1, Section 1 (Concluded)

King	Number					Father				
	B	P	U	L	N	B	P	U	L	N
EDRIS (AMSAMI), IDRIS ALOOMA	54	53	59	53	52	Ali	same (#50)	same	—	Ali
	55	54	60	54	53	Idris	same	same	same	same
	56	55	61	55	54	Idris	same	same	same	same
HAJ OMAR, HAJJ UMR	57	56	62	56	—	Idris	same	same	same	—
	—	—	63	57	—	—	—	Omar	same	—
	58	57	64	58	55	Haj Omar	same	Omar	same	same
ALI, HAJJ ALI EDRIS, IDRIS	59	58	65	59	56	Ali	same	same	same	same
	60	59	66	60	57	Ali	same	same	same	same
	61	60	67	—	58	Dunama	same	same	—	Dunama
HAJ HAMDUN, HADJ DUNAMA(N.)	62	61	68	61	59	Haj Hamdun	same	same	Dunama Hadji son of Dunama	Hadj Dunama
	—	—	—	62	—	—	—	—	Dunama Hadji	—
MOHAMMED	63	62	69	63	60	Mohammed	Aman	Mohammed	same	same
	64	63	70	64	61	Haj Dunama	Hajj Hamdun	Hadj Dunama	Hadj (Dunama)	Hadj Dunama
	65	64	71	65	62	Ali	same	same	same	same
AHMED DUNAMA (LEFIAMI)	66	65	72	66	63	Ahmed	same	same	same	same
	—	66	—	68	—	—	Ali (#63)	—	Ali	—
	68	67	—	70	64	Ahmed	same	—	Ahmed	same
ALI DALATUMI	—	68	—	—	—	—	Ibrahim	—	—	—

TABLE 1, Section 2 (Maternal Lineage and Length of Reign)

King	Mother			Length of reign				
	B	P	U	B	P	U	L	N
SEIF	woman of Mecca	Aisa	woman of Mecca ^d	20	—	—	20	20
IBRAHIM, BIRAM, BREM	Aaisha	—	Aicha	16	—	—	16	10
DUKU, DUGU, DUNAMA (N.)	Ghafaluwa	Gafalua	Afalouwa	(250)	—	51	52	205
FUNE	—	—	Foukalchi	60	—	58	60	60
ARITSO, ARSU, HARTSO, ARJOU	Fukalshi	Fagalmaram	—	50	—	49	50	50
KATURI	—	—	—	(250)	—	19	20	20
ADYOMA, WAYAMA, BIYOMA	Tumayu	same	Toumatou	20	—	58	—	—
BULU	Ghanjaya	same	same	16	—	16	16	16
ARKI, ARKU, ARKAMAN	Azisenna	Arsat	—	44	—	42	44	43
SHU, HUWA, HOUA, SIOU	Tefsu	Teksuwa	—	4	—	4	4	62
S ₃ L ₃ MA, DJIL, ABD EL JILIL, ABDALLAH (L.&N.)	woman of tribe of Ghemarma	Bure	—	4	—	4	4	62
HUME, UME, UMME DUNAMA	Tikramma	Tigiram	—	12	12	12	23	22
BIRI	Kinta	same	—	55	53	53	55	54
ABD ALLAH, DALA, BEKER, BIKORU	Fasame	Fasama	—	27	26	26	27	27
S ₃ L ₃ MA, TSILIM, ABD EL JILIL	Zincb	same	—	17	17	17	15	14
	Huwa	Kime	—	27	17	28	20	20

TABLE 1, Section 2 (Continued)

King	Mother			Length of reign				
	B	P	U	B	P	U	L	N
AHMED, DUNAMA (DIBALEMI)	Dibala	Dabale	Dibbale	40	38	14	44	42
BIRI	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
KADE, KADAI, ABD EL KADIM	Mathala	same	woman of house of Matala	29	19	18	7	7
BIRI, IBRAHIM (B) OTHMAN (P), KACHIM-BIRI	Zineb	same	same	20	21	20	17	16
DJIL, DJILIL	—	—	—	—	—	0	1	—
DIRKO-KELEM, DARIN KALOUMI	—	—	—	—	—	19	19	28
IBRAHIM NIKALE, HAJJ IBRAHIM	Kakudi	same	same	20	21	20	20	1
ABDALLAH	Fatima	same	same	20	21	19	4	4
S ₃ L ₃ MA, TSILIM	Kamma	Hawa	Kime	4	5	3	1 yr, 5 m	2
KURE GHANA, KORE AL SAGHIR	—	—	—	1	1	2	7 m	—
KURE, KURA, KORE AL KABIR	—	—	—	1	1	1	8 m	1
MOHAMMED	—	Kagala	same	1	1	2	—	—
EDRIS, IDRIS (HAFSAMI NIGA- LEMI)	Hafsa	same	same	25	25	25	25	24
NIGALEMI)	Fatima	same	same	10	10	13	13	—
DAUD (FATIMAMI)								

TABLE 1, Section 2 (Continued)

King	Mother			Length of reign				
	B	P	U	B	P	U	L	N
OTHMAN, OSMAN	—	—	—	4	8 m	3	8 m	1
OTHMAN	Famafa	—	Famafa	2	—	2	—	—
ABU BAKR (LIYATU)	—	—	—	9 m	0	1	1	1
IDRIS (SARADIMA LADAREM)	—	—	—	—	—	8	7	?
DUNAMA	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	7
OMAR, UMR	—	—	—	5	4	7	7	7
SAID, SAAD	—	—	—	1	0	1	7 m	—
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
KADE AFUNU, KADE AUJA	—	—	—	1	1	1	1	1
BIRI, OTHMAN(P)	—	—	—	33	33	32	—	—
OTHMAN (KAL- NAMA)	—	—	—	9 m	0	1	—	—
DUNAMA	—	—	—	2	2	2	4	4
ABDALLAH, DALA (AUJA)	—	—	—	8	9	8	7	7
IBRAHIM	—	—	—	8	7	8	—	—
KADE, KADAI	—	—	—	1	1	6	7	6
BIRI	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	6
DUNAMA	—	—	Fousa	4	4	4	4	4
MOHAMMED	Matala ^e	same	same	5 m	2	1	5	5
AMER, MER,	Aaisha, daughter of Othman	Aisha, daughter of Othman	Aicha ^f	1	2	2	1 yr, 5 m	1
AMARMA, OUME	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE 1, Section 2 (Continued)

King	Mother			Length of reign				
	B	P	U	B	P	U	L	N
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	?	3	5	5	5
GHAJI, GAJI	Amala ? ^g	Imalaha	—	5	6	5	—	—
OTHMAN	—	—	—	5	5	10	11	11
OMAR, UMR	—	—	—	1	1	0	3	3
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	5	5	0	3	3
ALI GHAJIDENI, ALI GAJI	—	Zeinab	same	33	27	34	28	27
EDRIS KATARKA- MABI, IDRIS	Aaisha	same	same	23	23	22	23	23
KATAGARMABE	Zineb	—	—	19	19	15	24	24
MOHAMMED	Zineb	same	same	1	1	?	5 yr, 5 m	1
ALI	—	Fanna	—	—	?	—	—	—
ALI FANNAMI (Regent)	—	Fanna	—	—	?	—	—	—
DUNAMA (GHAMA- RAMI)	—	Fanna	—	19	9	22	19 yr, 9 m	16
ABD ALLAH, DALA, ABDALLA	—	—	—	7	7	7	6 yr, 10 m	7
AISA KILI N'GIRMARAMMA ^a	—	—	—	—	8	7	—	—
EDRIS (AMSAMI), IDRIS ALOOMA	Aaisha Kel- eghrarmaram	a princess of the Bulala	Amsa	33	32	36	51 yr, 5 m	51
MOHAMMED	Fanna	Amina	—	16 yr 7 m	16	16	16	10
IBRAHIM	Ghumsu ¹	Gumsu	Goumsa	7 yr 7 m	7	7	7	7

TABLE 1, Section 2 (*Concluded*)

King	Mother			Length of reign				
	B	P	U	B	P	U	L	N
Haj Omar, Hajj Umr	Fishama	Fusam	same	19 yr 9 m	19	18	16	—
Biri	—	—	—	—	—	0	7 m	—
Ali, Hajj Ali	—	—	—	40	36-40	37	38 yr, 5 m	39
Edris, Idris	—	—	—	20	19	17	20	20
Dunama	—	—	—	19	18	15	19	18
Haj Hamdun, Hadj Dunama(N.)	—	—	—	14	14	12	—	23
Mohammed (Erg-Hamma)	—	—	—	16	16	13	14	15
Mohammed	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	—
Dunama Gana, Dunama Sr'ir	—	Lefiya	—	2 yr, 7 m	3	2	3	3
Ali	—	—	—	40	41	40	46	44
Ahmed	—	—	—	17	17	17	17	17
Dunama (Lefiami)	—	—	—	8	6	7	7	7
Mohammed	—	—	—	—	3	—	4	—
Ibrahim	—	—	—	28	29	—	28	28
Ali Dalatumi	—	—	—	—	40 days	—	—	—

TABLE 1, Section 3 (Dates of Reign)

King	Dates (A.D.)				
	B	P	U	I	N
SEIF	—	—	—	784-804	—
IBRAHIM, BIRAM, BREM	—	—	—	804-820	—
DUKU, DUGU, DUNAMA (N.)	2nd half of 9th cen.	c. 600	784-835	820-872	—
FUNE	—	—	835-893	872-932	—
ARITSO, ARSU, HARTSO, ARJOU	—	c. 850	893-942	932-982	—
KATURI	—	c. 900	942-961	982-1002	—
ADYOMA, WAYAMA, BIYOMA	prob. 1000-1019	—	961-1019 ¹	—	—
BULU	—	c. 950	1019-1035	1002-1018	946-962
ARKI, ARKU, ARKAMAN	—	—	1035-1077	1018-1062	962-1005
SHU, HUWA, HOUA, SIU	—	c. 1075	1077-1081	1062-1066	1005-1067
S ₂ L ₃ MA, DJIL, ABD EL JILIL, ABDALLAH (L.&N.)	—	—	1081-1085	1066-1070	1067-1129
HUME, UME, UMME	1086-1097	1085-1097	1085-1097	1070-1093	1129-1151
DUNAMA	1098-1150	1098-1151	1097-1150	1093-1148	1151-1205
BIRI	1151-1176	1151-1177	1150-1176	1148-1175	1205-1232
ABD ALLAH, DALA, BEKER, BIKORU	1177-1193	1177-1194	1176-1193	1175-1190	1232-1246
S ₃ L ₃ MA, TSILIM, ABD EL JILIL	1194-1220	1194-1221	1193-1210	1190-1210	1246-1266

TABLE 1, Section 3 (Continued)

King	Dates (A.D.)				
	B	P	U	L	N
AHMED, DUNAMA (DIBALEMI)	1221-1259	1221-1259	1210-1224	1210-1254	1266-1308 1308-1309
BIRI	—	—	—	—	—
KADE, KADAI,					
ABD EL KADIM	1259-1285	1259-1278	1224-1242	1274-1281	1337-1344
BIRI, IBRAHIM(B)					
OTHMAN(P),					
KACHIM-BIRI	1288-1306	1279-1300	1242-1262	1287-1304	1351-1367
DJIL, DJILIL	—	—	?	1254-1255	—
DIRKO-KELEM,					
DARIN KALOUMI	—	—	1262-1281	1255-1274	1309-1337
IBRAHIM NIKALE,					
HAJJ IBRAHIM	1307-1326	1300-1321	1281-1301	1304-1324	1367-1368
ABDALLAH	1326-1345	1321-1342	1301-1320	1281-1285	1344-1348
S ₉ L ₉ MA, TSILIM	1346-1349	1342/3-1347/8	1320-1323	1286-1287	1349-1351
KURE GHANA,					
KORE AL SAGHIR	1350	1348-1349	1323-1325	1286	1349
KURE KURA,					
KORE AL KABIR	1351	1349-1350	1325-1326	1285	1348-1349
MOHAMMED	1352	1351-1352	1326-1328	—	—
EDRIS, IDRIS					
(HAFSAMI NIGA- LEMI)	1353-1376	1353-1376	1328-1353*	1372-1397	1402-1426
DAUD (FATIMAMI NIGALEMI)	1377-1386	1376-1386	1353-1366	1325-1338	—
OTHMAN, OSMAN	1387-1390	1386	1366-1369	1338	1368-1369
OTHMAN	1391-1392	—	1369-1371	—	—

TABLE 1, Section 3 (Continued)

King	Dates (A.D.)				
	B	P	U	L	N
ABU BAKR (LIYATU)	1392	1386	1371-1372	1338-1339	1369-1370
IDRIS (SARADIMA LADAREM)	—	—	1372-1380	1339-1346	?
DUNAMA	—	—	—	1324-1325	1370-1377
OMAR, UMR	1394-1398	1386/7-1390/1	1380-1387	1399-1406	1428-1435
SAID, SAAD	1398-1399	1391	1387-1388	1406-1407	1435
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	1397-1398	1426-1427
KADE AFUNU, KADE AUJA	1399-1400	1391-1392	1388-1389	1398-1399	1427-1428
BIRI, OTHMAN(P)	1400-1432	1392-1424/25	1389-1421	—	—
OTHMAN (KAL- NAMA)	1432	1425	1421-1422	—	—
DUNAMA	1433-1434	1425-1427	1422-1424	1407-1411	1435-1439
ABDALLAH, DALA (AUJA)	1435-1442	1427-1436	1424-1432	1411-1418	1439-1446
IBRAHIM	1442-1450	1436-1443	1432-1440	—	—
KADE, KADAI	1450-1451	1443-1444	1440-1446	1346-1353	1377-1383
BIRI	—	—	—	1427-1433	1455-1461
DUNAMA	1451-1455	1444-1448	1446-1450	1433-1437	1461-1465
MOHAMMED	1455	1448-1450	1450-1451	1418-1423	1446-1451
AMER, MER, UMME, AMAN	—	—	—	—	—
AMARMA, OUME	1456	1450-1452	1451-1453	1423-1424	1451-1452
MOHAMMED	a few days	1452/3-1455	1453-1458	1364-1369	1394-1399
GHAJI, GAJI	1456-1461	1455-1461	1458-1463	—	—
OTHMAN	1461-1466	1461-1466	1463-1473	1353-1364	1383-1394

TABLE 1, Section 3 (Continued)

King	Dates (A.D.)				
	B	P	U	L	N
OMAR, UMR	1466	1466-1467	During 1st 6 yrs of Ali (#32)	1424-1427	1452-1455
MOHAMMED	1467-1471	1467-1472	—	1369-1372	1399-1402
ALI GHAJIDENI, ALI GAJI	1472-1504	1476-April 3, 1503	1473-March 29, 1507	1437-1465	1465-1492
EDRIS KATARKA- MABI, IDRIS	1504-1526	1503-1526	1507-1529	1465-1488	1492-1515
KATAGARMABE	1526-1545	1526/7-1545	1529-1544	1488-1512	1515-1539
MOHAMMED	1545	1545-1546	1544-1548	1538-1543	1562-1563
ALI FANNAMI (Regent)	—	?	—	—	—
DUNAMA (GHAMA- RAMI)	1546-1563	1546-1555	1548-1566	1512-1531	1539-1555
ABD ALLAH, DALA, ABDALLA	1564-1570	1555-1562/3	1566-1573	1531-1538	1555-1562
AISA KILI N'GIRMARAMMA	—	1562/3-1570	1573-1580	—	—
EDRIS (AMSAMI), IDRIS ALOOMA	1571-1603	1570-1602/3	1580-1616	1545-1596	1563-1614
MOHAMMED	1602-1618	1602/3-1618	1616-1632	1596-1612	1614-1624
IBRAHIM	1618-1625	1618-1625	1632-1639	1612-1619	1624-1631
HAJ OMAR, HAJJ UMR	1625-1645	1625-1644	1639-1657	1619-1635	—
BIRI	—	—	1657	1635-1636	—
ALI, HAJJ ALI	1645-1684	1644-1680/4	1657-1694	1636-1674	1631-1670
EDRIS, IDRIS	1685-1704	1680/4-1699	1694-1711	1674-1694	1670-1690

TABLE 1, Section 3 (Concluded)

King	Dates (A.D.)				
	B	P	U	I	N
DUNAMA	1704-1722	1699-1717	1711-1726	1694-1713	1690-1708
Haj HAMDUN, HADJ DUNAMA (N.)	1723-1736	1717-1731	1726-1738	—	1708-1731
MOHAMMED (ERG- HAMMA)	1737-1751	1731-1747	1738-1751	1713-1727 1727-1742	1731-1746
MOHAMMED	—	—	—	—	—
DUNAMA GANA, DUNAMA SR'IR	1752-1755	1747-1750	1751-1753	1742-1745	1746-1749
ALI	1755-1793	1750-1791	1753-1793	1745-1791	1749-1793
AHMED	1793-1810	1791-1808	1793-1810	1791-1808	1793-1810
DUNAMA (LEFIAMI)	1810-1818	1808-1811; 1814-1817	1810-1817	1808-1811; 1814-1817	1810-1817
MOHAMMED	—	1811-1814	—	1811-1817	—
IBRAHIM	1818-1846	1817-1846	—	1818-1846	1818-1846
ALI DALATUMI	—	1846	—	—	—

NOTES TO TABLE 1

^a This Kade has progeny who gained the throne. Although possible, it seems quite unlikely from all other evidence that this is a usurpation. The only Dunama he can possibly have as father is Dunama Dibalemi, who seems to have married a woman from the household of his father's sister. This means that Kade's mother stood in the sociological relationship to him of father's sister's daughter. By "sociological" I mean that she was a daughter or girl of the household (by descent or clientship), over whom the household head had marriage dispensation rights.

^b These numbers refer to the numbering system of the author himself; that is, #20 on Palmer's list.

^c This man is supposed to be the son of a king's wife by an unknown father, and he is also recorded to be the half-brother (same mother) of the next king, in whose name he reigned as regent. It indicates the power of the dead king's faction in the state or the political acumen of the queen in having her nonroyal son hold on to power for his royal half-brother who was too young to rule, thus allowing her to remain as a titled woman in the royal household.

^d Landeroin gives the mother of Seif as Aissata, and the mother of Idris Alooma (#54 on Barth's list) as Amsatou. He gives no other royal mothers. Nachtigal gives none at all.

^e There is no mention of the royal status of this person, although Matala is a title (name) that is often connected in the traditions with the monarch's sister's household.

^f This usurper is the son of a king's daughter—that is, a *maidu* (grandson of a king) or lesser royal person who can become a *maina* (son of a king) and therefore an heir to the throne if his own father becomes a king. In this case such a development was impossible, and Aisha's son chose instead to usurp.

^g Amala is a woman's name; therefore this king is a usurper.

^h Legends state that this woman ruled as regent until Idris Alooma was able to take the throne, and that she built a separate household at Gamburu. She was not the mother of Idris Alooma as Barth suggests; this is shown by his name, "Amsami."

ⁱ Gumsu is the title given to the senior wife of the monarch.

^j The A.H. dates are 390-410, but the A.H. dates for the previous king are 330-350. There is a loss of forty years here that is made up in the A.D. dating. Since the only length of reign mentioned for this monarch (from Barth) is twenty years, it seems likely that Urvoy made a mistake on these dates.

^k The dates are given as 1328-1335. This is a misprint and should have been 1353.

Comparing Urvoy with Barth and Palmer combined, and counting all differences except those of sequence, there is an over-all agreement of 93 per cent. Doing the same thing with Urvoy on the one hand and Nachtigal and Landeroin on the other, there is a 75 per cent correspondence. If we take Barth and Palmer on the one hand and Nachtigal and Landeroin on the other, there is a 71 per cent agreement between the two combined sets of data. Breaking the lists down into sections of high and low agreement gives us further insight into the material. Using Barth's order of kings, all the sources are in complete agreement for the first seventeen Kanem-Bornu monarchs, except for Landeroin and Nachtigal who omit king no. 7. This gives Landeroin and Nachtigal a 94 per cent correspondence with the others for this period. The period from the mid-thirteenth century to the early sixteenth, that is, from king no. 18 to no. 48, on Barth's list shows the greatest variation among sources. Nachtigal and Landeroin mention or omit twelve monarchs not mentioned or not omitted by Barth and Palmer for this period. In other words, they vary from Barth and Palmer by 40 per cent, not counting differences in order or sequence, which would bring the differences up to over 50 per cent. Urvoy differs from Barth and Palmer in three cases (10 per cent) for this time span, and from Landeroin and Nachtigal in ten cases (30 per cent). In the final section of the king lists, nos. 49 to 68 on Barth's list, Palmer differs from Barth in only one case, while Landeroin and Nachtigal differ from Barth and Palmer in seven cases (29 per cent). However, in this time span Landeroin and Nachtigal differ from one another in five cases (25 per cent). Urvoy differs from Barth and Palmer in only three cases (15 per cent), and from Nachtigal and Landeroin in eight cases (40 per cent), for this period. Finally, if we arrange all the authors singly and the percentage similarity they bear to one another, we get the results shown in Table 2. This table²⁷ indicates that Palmer

²⁷ This type of table has been used in archaeology to determine time sequences by C. W. Brainerd, "The Place of Chronological Ordering in Archaeological Analysis," *American Antiquity*, XVI (1951), 301-313; and by W. S. Robinson, "A Method of Chronologically Ordering Archaeological Deposits," *ibid.*, 293-301; and in social anthropology by H. E. Driver and W. C. Massey,

is most similar to Barth, Urvoy is next similar, then Landeroin, and then Nachtigal. The regular descending order of figures also means that each of the sources is similar to all the others in the order given in the table. This was my guess in constructing the original table, but there was no means of proving it until this lenticular table was constructed. Incidentally, Table 2 also shows that, if we simply had the published works of these various authors and no dates of publication, it would be plausible to claim their actual order of publication to be that given in the table (if we knew Barth was first), and to add that Landeroin and Nachtigal are closer to one another than they are to any of the others.

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN KING LISTS

	B	P	U	L	N
B		93	91	74	72
P			88	75	72
U				78	76
L					88
N					

In making my own king list I followed Urvoy's axiom that the course of history, like love, is often a tortuous one. Thus I was suspicious of fraternal succession series that ran from one sibling to the next until all had been on the throne consecutively. This I felt to be especially true if there were several lineage segments all of which had possible contenders. In three cases I merged two of the kings for what I considered good and sufficient reasons. For example, king no. 20 on my list is given to two separate names, Djilil (Arabic) in Nachtigal and Biri (Kanuri) in Landeroin. These are the only sources to mention these kings in this position, and each king is accorded the same place by both authors, given the same father and the same length of reign. If such a reign existed at all, it is probable that it was held by one man, no matter how many names he is remembered by. On other occasions, I felt it wise to make

"Comparative Studies of North American Indians," American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, XLVII, 2 (1957), 163-465, to determine the relative order of change among various aspects of social organization.

only a very provisional decision. Thus, king no. 42 is said to be a son of Othman, and there are no other clues as to which of the three Othmans in the preceding generations he might belong (nos. 30, 31, or 39). Traditions record that he was murdered by his brother.²⁸ But since the term "brother" can apply to brother or cousin, we cannot tell whether no. 42 is closely or distantly related to no. 43, his alleged murderer, who is also attributed to be a son of one of three Othmans. Urvoy and Palmer both make a choice in this case, and each a different one, without indicating why they have done so. In fact, the documented or genealogically logical choice is unavailable. It would seem more accurate simply to make it clear that we are ignorant about some things. My own revised king list is given with explanatory notes at the end of this essay.

TABLE 3. FATHER-SON AS COMPARED WITH NONFILIAL SUCCESSION
IN THE BORNU KING LISTS

List	Father-Son rule		Nonfilial rule		Significance
	N	Mean years on the throne	N	Mean years on the throne	
Cohen	15	16.5	41	9.6	.05 level
Barth	16	17.4	34	9.7	.05 level
Palmer	15	18.6	35	8.7	.01 level
Urvoy	15	11.1	41	10.4	not sig.
Landeroin	20	11.5	31	11.8	not sig.
Nachtigal	21	14.3	27	10.3	not sig.

In all cases I began counting with king no. 17 and ended with no. 72 on my own list. All reigns of one year or less were counted as half a year. Table 3 shows the differences between father-son as opposed to nonfilial succession in all of the various king lists. The letter N in the table refers to the number of monarchs included in this category, so that there are, for example, fifteen monarchs who inherited the throne from their own fathers as against forty-one who did not. The significance level is an indication of the difference between the means, which takes into account each separate rule considered per list and the variation of each from the mean itself. The standard .05 and .01 levels of significance are used to show that, on

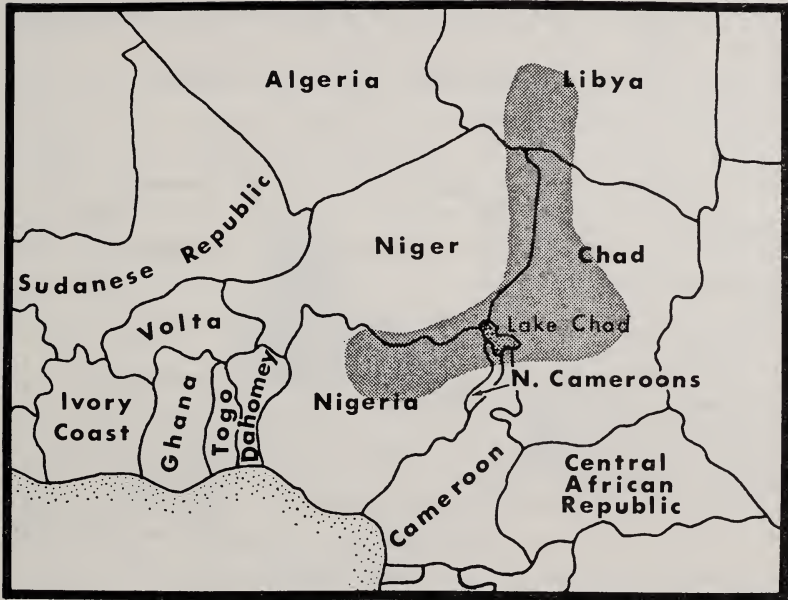
²⁸ Barth, *Travels*, II, 642.

two of the lists, the difference between means could have occurred only five times in one hundred by chance, and in one of them (Palmer's) this significance level is even higher. On three of the lists, those of Urvoy, Landeroin, and Nachtigal, none of the differences among means was great enough to reach the .05 level, although all, excepting Landeroin, are in the predicted direction.

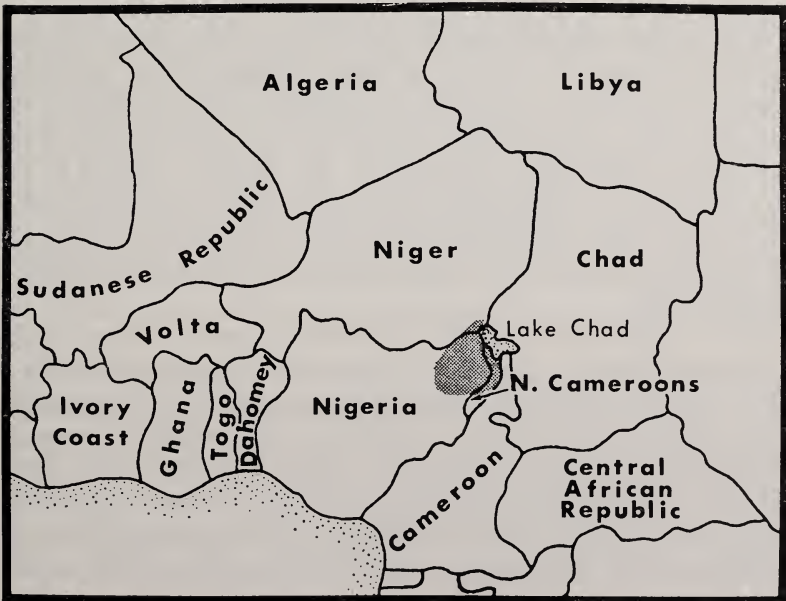
The differences in the lists are the result of choices made by the authors or of variations in their material. Urvoy copied a misprint in Barth for king no. 17 and gave him a reign of fourteen years instead of forty. He differs from Barth, Palmer, and me on the length of two other reigns, each of which effectively cuts down his father-son score and, indeed, makes insignificant the over-all difference between the two types of inheritance. Nachtigal and Landeroin, as indicated in Table 3, simply have more father-son succession and fewer nonfilials in their lists, thus giving the father-son successions more chances to share in the shorter reigns and making them quite similar in this respect to the nonfilial successions. Although there are still some difficulties, it seems more solidly established now to claim that my original supposition was correct, and that father-son successions to the throne are longer-lasting than other varieties and are thus more stable.

Two other points of anthropological and historical interest seem worthy of mention at this point. First, it is clear that there is an inverse relationship between the range of the royal genealogy (numbers of rulers per generation) and the size of the kingdom. When the range is narrow, the kingdom is large; when it is wide, the kingdom has collapsed or is diminishing. This points to the simple fact that a large number of contenders at any one time causes internal dissension, so that tributary states and tribes are less vigilantly included in the hegemony of the kingdom. This relationship can be seen in the accompanying maps of Bornu power at different dates. (The maps are taken from Urvoy, "*Histoire de l'Empire du Bornou*."²⁹ The accuracy of this material should be subjected to the same scrutiny as the king lists themselves. However, this is the best estimate we have at present without going into detailed historiographic analysis.)

²⁹ Y. Urvoy, *Histoire de l'Empire du Bornou*, *Memoires de l'Institut Francais d'Afrique Noire*, No. 7, Librairie Larose.



Map 1. Kanem-Bornu in 1300.



Map 2. Kanem-Bornu in 1450.



Map 3. Kanem-Bornu in 1600.

Second, the early periods of Kanem-Bornu king lists make considerable mention of the clan or ethnic background of the ruler's mother. This seems to diminish and die out after the end of the twelfth century, and in its place the lineage properties of the king's mother are emphasized, especially if she herself is related to the royal line. This is admittedly insufficient evidence on its own, but it may reflect a clan background to Kanuri political life that lost importance as state centralism and the importance of royalty increased through time.

As far as historical research is concerned, absolute dating may be a *summum bonum* to a historian, but to an anthropologist, most of whose historical information comes from archaeology or ethno-history, such desirable goals are virtually unobtainable. In some archaeological work it is considered a highly successful result if one can arrive at valid relative dating or sequential dating, and this may involve years of study if sites are shallow and unstratified. Given the fact that in only five instances in all the king lists are all authors

agreed on the exact length of any ruler's reign, it seems overly ambitious to attempt to distill absolute dates for all the various reigns of the Bornu kings. Indeed, the only absolute date given for the death of a monarch in the pre-nineteenth-century period, that of Ali Gajedeni, differs in Palmer (April 3, 1503) and Urvoy (March 29, 1507). Dates given by outside sources are again lacking in exact agreement, and it is difficult to fit the entire fabric of dates into some meaningful whole without in the end arbitrarily choosing one over another. Consequently I have lowered my sights and aimed for a set of discrete historical periods whose validity is attested to by many sources, although there would probably be some disagreement among them about the exact beginning and end of any one period. On the other hand, it should be noted that, unlike those anthropologists who must use only archaeological or ethnological data, we are in the case of Bornu much closer to the orthodox historian since we do in fact have calendrical dates for many events, which, if not in exact agreement, are quite close to one another.

I have divided the history of the first Kanem-Bornu dynasty into six periods, using the kings as units within a period and as boundary points for their beginning and end.

I. Legendary Period—Earliest Times to the End of the Eleventh Century. The first period of Kanem-Bornu history has no known beginning, and it probably goes back to at least classical times, when the Carthaginians were contacting the Garamantians in the southern Fezzan. This is a period for which we have very few outside dates or references to indicate that any of the kings from no. 1 to no. 11 has any real historical validity. More than likely, most of the future research for this period will have to come from archaeology and comparative ethnology, in which social and political developments are deduced from comparative sociocultural and ecological relationships.

II. The Beginnings of Political Consolidation—1100 to 1250. This period begins with the reign of king no. 12 and runs through to the death of no. 17 on my list, that is, from the eleventh century to the middle of the thirteenth. It is marked at its beginning by the reign of Mai Hume, who is supposed to have been a Moslem and to have died in Egypt on his way to Mecca, according to Kanuri traditions. Palmer questions this and says that Islam did not come to Kanem

until the time of Dunama Dibalemi (no. 17 on my list).³⁰ Whatever the actual dates, this period may validly be said to bear witness to the recognition of Kanem as a developing state, with an expanding hegemony in the central Sahara, and the inception of Islam as a state religion.

III. *Period of Imperial Florescence and Competition Between the Kade and Kachim-Biri Royal Segments—1250 to 1350.* This short period from king no. 18 to no. 27, or from the middle of the thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century, marks the florescence of Kanem-Bornu power in the central Sahara. In the shape of a boomerang, the kingdom covered almost the entire north-south depression in which the Chad-Tripoli trade was established; it curved westward at Chad to cover the major trade routes to Hausaland and perhaps the area directly north of it. The competition between the Kade and Kachim-Biri segments is mentioned as such only by inference, since no record of great conflict has come to my attention. The use of this term is only a relative one, for the earlier periods have nothing but a single line of kings who have no ruling sibling segments.

IV. *Period of Conflict and Competition Between the Idris and Daud Segments of the Kachim-Biri Line—1350 to 1475.* This period of some one hundred years' duration is widely recognized as one of *Sturm und Drang*. On my list it runs from kings no. 28 to no. 52. Kachim-Biri's line finally won out or outlasted that of Kade in the previous period, and Biri's son, Ibrahim Nikale, had four sons who ascended the throne. Two of these, Idris and Daud, created segments containing relatively large numbers of monarchs. The Daud segment has ten, perhaps eleven, rulers in it before it dies out, and the Idris segment produced at least twelve kings before the period came to a close. Needless to say, the period is replete with short reigns, usurpations, assassinations, and rebellions, one of which led the Magumi Sefuwa rulers to abandon Kanem and move to Bornu.

V. *The Second Period of Imperial Expansion, The Bornu Kingdom—1475 to 1750.* From the late fifteenth century to the middle or even late eighteenth century (from king no. 53 to no. 69 or 70), Bornu rebuilt its hegemony in the Chad basin and the central Sa-

³⁰ Palmer, *Bornu*, 159.

hara. The period is ushered in by the long reign of Ali Gajedeni and the founding of the capital of Birni Ngazargamo. Bornu may not have been the enormous power it seems to have been in the 1250-1350 period, but the empire was still one of the great military and political powers in the Sudan. Some writers tend to depict Bornu as declining in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, it should be remembered that in the mid-eighteenth century Bornu was sending military expeditions into the Hausa country and presumably elsewhere as well.³¹ Boahen claims that of all the trans-Saharan trade routes, the Fezzan-Chad one was the most active from the beginning of the seventeenth right up to the early nineteenth century.³²

VI. *The Collapse of the Magumi Sefuwa Dynasty—1750 to 1846.* The end of this period is too well documented to spend much time in discussing it here. Its end, and the demise of the dynasty, was brought on by the rise of the Sokoto Fulani and the concomitant rise to power in Bornu of the Kanembu Shehus. King no. 70 on my list, who reigned from approximately 1750 to 1790, seems to have ushered in a period of military weakness, which became acute just as the Fulani threatened Bornu. The fact that trade from Tripoli to Bornu flourished until at least the 1820s indicates that the decline was a gradual one, and that latter-day greatness maintained the power of the state even after its military might was not equal to the task of its imperial sovereignty.

3. CONCLUSIONS

This essay began as an exercise in historiography from which historical and anthropological problems were derived. I began the work on the king lists because it seemed impossible by any simple reference to the lists to prove or disprove a hypothesis about the length of reigns. It was predicted that father-son succession would, on the average, be associated with longer and more stable monarchies. Closer study of the king lists as historical documents has given me a more reliable basis for making the generalization. However, since reigns are much shorter than periods, and since there

³¹ *Ibid.*, 253.

³² A. A. Boahen, "The Caravan Trade in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History*, III (1962), 349-359.

are very few outside sources to corroborate the length of reigns, the entire subject is open to some doubt unless we can assume an equal number of mistakes of all kinds, randomly spread throughout the king lists of each author. If there is any reason to suspect that father-son successions are biased toward lengthiness of rule, or that other kinds of succession are biased toward shortness, then of course the hypothesis has not been validated. Luckily, my material is actually biased heavily against the hypothesis in those cases where it has not been upheld. Urvoy considerably reduces the *length* of a number of father-son reigns, while Nachtigal and Landeroin increase the *number* of these reigns, consequently giving some of the shorter reigns a greater chance to appear in this category and making it more probable that father-son successions will not indicate any distinct features. In other words, there are reasonable grounds for understanding why the hypothesis does not operate on those lists for which it must be rejected.

At least two other anthropological generalizations have been made more conclusive during the preparation of this essay. First, there is an inverse relationship between the numbers of contenders for the throne during any generation and the range or scale of sovereignty exercised by the state. A widely ranging, or increasing, number of royal contenders is associated with a declining or shrinking state power. Second, it seems likely that clan and ethnic identification was more important in early Kanem-Bornu and died out as state centralism and royalty became a more important part of the national life. Since patrilineal clan organization is very strongly associated with nomadic pastoralism, it may be that this decline in the importance of the clan is also a reflection of a change from pastoral nomadism to a more sedentary agricultural way of life.

In historical terms, the amount of agreement among all the Kanem-Bornu king lists is very strong, indeed so strong that some historical validity must be attributed to these documents. The fact that there is very high agreement amounting almost to congruency, as well as straight-line father-son succession, for the oldest portions indicates that (1) this part of the king list is probably closer to legend than fact, and (2) there have probably been several omissions at this level, which have become standardized in the traditions. The increased disagreement among all sources during the

period of conflict suggests that king lists are less reliable when they are wider in range per generation level. The fact that there is quite high agreement among the sources for the periods since the rule of Ali Gajedeni at about the end of the sixteenth century, and nevertheless some disagreement too, indicates that this part of the king list is probably the most reliable, and this is attested to by other sources as well.

Nachtigal and Landeroin differ in a number of periods with respect to their order of succession, and these changes in order are in the direction of the smoothing and bunching of consecutive rulers into lineage segments. It is likely that oral as opposed to written records will tend to smooth and bunch the sequence of kings on a remembered list. Further, since Nachtigal and Landeroin do this more often than the others, it seems plausible to conclude that their material, even though it comes mostly from written documents, has been more distorted than that given by other sources; it is probably more closely related to oral traditions than to written ones. I would suggest that this stems from the fact that dynastic information is most easily remembered in segments of siblings descended from a common parent. It is one thing to remember all of the names in a dynastic list, and quite another to remember the order of succession. Remembering the dynasty in terms of lineage segments tends to interfere with the possibility that the succession can be awarded to anyone in a royal line whose father has been on the throne. The names of a group of royal siblings are certainly remembered long after the order of their succession to the throne. Thus there is a smoothing and bunching effect in oral traditions of dynastic rule, such that full and half brothers from each segment of the royal lineage are named *in succession* because they are remembered as a group. In general, then, the more this type of succession appears to be the case in a royal genealogy where there is no such rule, the less trustworthy is the historical validity of the information. Critics of such a generalization may say that brother-to-brother succession was in fact a Kanuri pattern of some sort. Yet there is no evidence anywhere in the history of Bornu to support such a criticism.

On the other hand, my lenticular table and the historiographic information itself indicate that Barth, Palmer, and Urvoy are very close to one another, while Nachtigal and Landeroin are closer to

each other and differ from the others. Barth faced the same problem when he decided to trust documents that were in agreement, and to take less cognizance of the two shorter lists of kings that disagreed with the others. Certainly this seems to have been a wise choice and, if we follow it, we should give greater weight to Barth, Palmer, and Urvoy, especially when Nachtigal and Landeroin show internal evidence of distortion. However, if this had not been the case then we should have expected the lenticular table to form itself into the order of publication of the sources: Barth, Nachtigal, Landeroin, Palmer, and Urvoy. It did not because these writers are interrelated. This of course leads to a dilemma: agreement among sources whose authors are unknown (as is the case in many of the African materials) could be due to contact between them rather than to greater validity of the material. This obviously means that larger samples of oral traditions, king lists, and such, are required to make sure that not the least but the most amount of disagreement is present; common features then begin to emerge in sharp outline.

One more speculative point could be made about the sources. It is rather disappointing that the authors did not sort themselves out in the lenticular table in the order in which they published, although this was not expected. Had it happened, and had each author been equally independent in his data collection, then the table would have shed light on the rate of distortion of such material over time. This, it seems to me, is a possible next step in this kind of research, not only for king lists but for other cultural materials as well. A lenticular table can be of use both in ordering the data and in indicating the precise amount of agreement, thereby giving us a rough measure of the rate of change.

Finally, from the point of view of an anthropologist, I suggest that the establishment of periods in African tribal history may be a first step toward a greater understanding of African history in particular and cultural history in general. To be of real theoretical and empirical significance, the establishment of a period must be based on a theory that is worthy of investigation. The concept of a period involves that of "type," a degree of unity such that the culture included within the time span differs significantly as a whole from that in other periods. The unity of the type means, analytically, that there are a number of discrete correlations that are felt to exist

within the type; these also differ from type to type and, therefore, from period to period. It is for this reason that anthropologists do not go on creating more and more types or periods, since these are not simply names but theories which must be proven true or false by the presentation of empirical evidence. Thus the periods developed here, if they are at all helpful, should imply significant differences in Bornu society from period to period, and different kinds of internal conditions and interrelations between the various sectors of society and culture. Periodization, then, is a first step toward a theory of change and its constituent elements for a particular society. Whether or not the periods of Bornu history presented here do in fact meet these criteria is still unknown. But they are put forward on the basis of present information in the hope that they will provide a working theory.

In a geographical region, periods established for one tribe serve as a standard against which to compare the historical development of other groups. Such intraregional comparisons reveal problems of similarities and differences at similar time periods, and problems of different historical sequences that must be explained. The work of synthesizing a number of sequences of periods, usually referred to in anthropology as "developmental sequences," brings the anthropologist close to one of his ultimate goals, that of producing generalizations about cultural history as a natural process.³³ Historians and anthropologists can be of great assistance to one another in this task. Speaking as an anthropologist, I would hope that historians will criticize the historical methods and validity of the anthropologist's work, as well as contributing actual histories so that the data required for widely applicable theories of culture change will become available to those interested in generalizations based on historical research. On the other hand, it seems to me that historians can gain a great deal from the general categories of classification that anthropologists have developed for describing social and cultural life, and from methods of historical research developed by anthropologists who are accustomed to working with few if any written documents.

³³ See R. Cohen, "The Strategy of Social Evolution," *Anthropologica*, IV (1962), 321-348.

APPENDIX. A REVISED BORNU KING LIST

King	Father's name	Mother's name	Length of reign (approximate years)	Dates and period
1. Seif	Dhu Yazan	—	20	To end of 11th century. Legendary period.
2. Ibrahim	Seif	Aisa	16	
3. Dugu	Ibrahim	Gafalua	52	
4. Fune	Dugu	—	60	
5. Aritse	Fune	Fukalchi	50	
6. Katuri	Aritse	—	20	
7. Adyoma	Katuri	Tumayu	20	
8. Bulu	Adyoma	Ganjaya	16	
9. Arki	Bulu	Azasenaa	44	
10. Shu	Arki	Teksuwa	4	
11. Sələma	Shu	Bure? ^a	4	
12. Hume	Sələma	Tigiram	12	End of 11th century to mid-13th century. Beginnings of political consolidation.
13. Dunama	Hume	Kinta	54	
14. Biri	Dunama	Fasama	27	
15. Abdalla Bikur	Biri	Zainab	17	
16. Sələma (Abd-el-Jilil)	Abdalla Bikur	Huwa	20	
17. Dunama Dibalemi	Sələma	Dibala	40	
18. Kade ^b	Dunama	Matala	20	Mid-13th century to mid-14th century. Period of imperial florescence and competition between the Kade and Kachim-Biri royal segments.
19. Biri, Othman, Kachim-Biri	Dunama	Zainab	20	
20. { Djilil ^c Biri	Dunama Dunama	— —	1 1	
21. Dirke-Kelem	Dunama	—	20	
22. Ibrahim Nikale	Biri (no. 19)	Kagudi	20	
23. Abdalla	Kade (no. 18)	Fatima	20	
24. Sələma	Abdalla	Kime	4	
25. Kure Gana	Abdalla	—	1	
26. Kure Kura	Abdalla	—	1	
27. Mohammed	Abdalla	Kagala	1	
28. Idris	Ibrahim Nikale	Hafsa	25	Mid-14th century to late 15th century. Period of con-
29. Daud	Ibrahim Nikale	Fatima	10	

A REVISED BORNU KING LIST (*continued*)

King	Father's name	Mother's name	Length of reign (approximate years)	Dates and period
30. Othman	Daud	—	3	flict and competition between the Idris and Daud segments of the Kachim-Biri line; involves the move to Bornu.
31. Othman	Idris (no. 28)	Famafa	2	
32. Abu Bekr	Daud	—	1	
33. { Idris ^d Dunama	Daud Ibrahim, son of Daud	— —	8 } }	
34. Umar	Idris (no. 28)	—	5	
35. Said	Idris ^p (no. 28) ^e	—	1	
36. Mohammed	Idris (no. 28)	—	1	
37. Kade Afunu	Idris (no. 28)	—	1	
38. Biri Othman	Idris (no. 28)	—	33	
39. Othman	Daud (no. 29)	—	1	
Kalimumawa				
40. Dunama	Umar (no. 34)	—	2	
41. Abdalla	Umar (no. 34)	—	8	
42. Ibrahim	Othman	—	8	
43. Kade	Othman	—	4	
44. Biri	Dunama (no. 40 ^p)	—	1	
45. Dunama	Biri (no. 38)	—	4	
46. Mohammed	—	Matala	1	
47. Amarma, Ume, Amer	—	Aisa	1	
48. Mohammed	Kade (no. 43)	—	5	
49. Ghaji	—	Imala	5	
50. Othman	Kade (no. 43)	—	5	
51. Umar	Abdalla (no. 41)	—	1	
52. Mohammed	Mohammed	—	5	
53. Ali Gajideni	Dunama (no. 45)	Zainab	33	Late 15th century to mid-18th century. The second period of imperial expansion: the Bornu kingdom.
54. Idris Katar-gamabe	Ali Gajideni	Aisa	23	
55. Mohammed	Idris K.	Zainab	20	
56. Ali	Idris K.	Zainab	1	
57. Dunama	Mohammed (no. 55)	Fanna	20	

A REVISED BORNU KING LIST (*continued*)

King	Father's name	Mother's name	Length of reign (approximate years)	Dates and period
58. Abdalla	Dunama	—	7	
59. Aisa Kili ^f	?	—	7	
60. Idris Aloomaa	Ali (no. 56)	Amsa	35	
61. Mohammed	Idris A.	Fanna	16	
62. Ibrahim	Idris A.	Gumsu	7	
63. Haj Umar	Idris A.	Fusam	18	
64. {Biri ^g	Umar (no. 63)	—	?	
{Haj Ali	Umar (no. 63)	—	40	
65. Idris	Ali	—	20	
66. Dunama	Ali	—	18	
67. Haj Hamdun, Haj Dunama	Dunama (no. 66)	—	14	
68. Mohammed Ergama	Haf Hamdun	—	15	
69. Dunama Gana	Mohammed?	—	2	
70. Ali	Haj Dunama (no. 67)	—	40	C. 1750 to the death of Ibrahim (1846).
71. Ahmed	Ali	—	17	
72. Dunama	Ahmed	—	7	Collapse of the
73. Mohammed	Ali (no. 70)	—	3	Magumi Sefu-
74. Ibrahim	Ahmed	—	28	wa Dynasty.
75. Ali	Ibrahim	—	?	

^a Bure is mentioned by Palmer and no one else, although she is given clan affiliations by Palmer and Barth.

^b Kade's position is discussed in note c in the composite table (Table 1).

^c See text.

^d I have merged these rulers because they seem to be only vaguely remembered and are not reported in Barth or Palmer. Nachtigal and Landeroin give the same length of reign to each of them and the same paternity. I suggest that they are not really in the king list, or one reigned for a short time during the reign of the other, or they are the same person.

^e All sources except Barth agree on the paternity of this ruler. However, usurper is such a strong designation that I have labeled this case doubtful.

^f Aisa Kili is spoken of by Barth as the Magira, or queen mother, who built the palace of Gamburu near Birni Ngazargamo and helped to raise Idris Aloomaa. The mother of Idris was Amsa as indicated in his name, "Amsami." To be a queen mother and not his own mother would mean that she was his mother's co-wife. It may also be that Aisa and Amsa are variants of the same

name. I have separated Aisa because there is no valid way of knowing exactly who she was.

§ Biri is omitted from all lists except that of Landeroin. I have joined him to Haj Ali on the similar logical grounds as the previous case of Dunama and Idris above: they are either the same person, or Biri did not exist, or there was a short Biri rule during the reign of Haj Ali.

III

The Dynamics of Feudalism in Bornu

by

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THE IDEA OF FEUDALISM as applied to Africa seems to be a recurrent one among a number of works having to do with its traditional state societies. But much of this work has bogged down because of the lack of a theoretical approach to feudal society that will be able to cut across differing cultural traditions and social histories. A few brief examples from some of the recent literature will serve to illustrate this point. E. P. Skinner mentions C. Stephenson's eight characteristics of feudal society: (1) fief-holding with vassalage, (2) homage and fealty, (3) mutual obligations between lord and vassal, (4) military service from vassals, (5) inheritance of fiefs by heirs of vassals, usually by primogeniture, (6) subinfeudation, (7) attendance at court, and (8) wardship and marriage arrangements by which fiefs could be held in trust for minors and, in the case of female heirs, husbands who could render homage for them.¹ He then notes that the Mossi have the first six of these but lack the last two; that is, using Stephenson as a measure, the Mossi are about 75 per cent feudal compared with the original model. Skinner recognizes that this is obviously not a settled question, and asks that the whole problem of feudalism be kept open until more material from Africa is available for comparison.² This deferral is particularly necessary when it is realized that Stephenson's categories are not universally accepted and cannot be applied uniformly over the whole of feudal Europe.

More recently E. M. Chilver has used her understanding of European feudalism to caution us that analogies between feudal societies in Europe and elsewhere turn out to be superficial when examined more closely.³ Although wide-ranging political and social conditions

¹ E. P. Skinner, "Analysis of the Political Organization of the Mossi People," *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, ser. 2, XIX (1957), 748; C. Stephenson, *Medieval Feudalism* (Ithaca, 1956), chap. 2.

² Skinner, "Analysis," 749.

³ E. M. Chilver, "'Feudalism' in the Interlacustrine Kingdoms," in A. I. Richards, ed., *East African Chiefs* (London, 1960), 392.

like feudalism may recur, they are not adequate descriptions of each separate historical entity covered by the generalization. Thus she says that Bantu states cannot be said to arise from the breakdown of previously larger units, as was the case in Europe; or again that the judgment of a vassal was carried out by his peers in Europe and by his superiors in Buganda; or that warfare was in the hands of a professional fighting class in Europe but not in Buganda; and so on. In other words, at close range the Bantu states are quite different in many of their basic social and political relationships when compared to European feudal societies.

My chief criticism of such discussions is that they utilize discrete features as diagnostic qualities of feudalism. In so doing it is fairly easy to come across variant forms, and then one must either move to a higher level of abstraction, as Macquet has done,⁴ or declare African states to be feudal but perhaps only partially so, as Skinner suggests, or call them dissimilar in detail, as Chilvers has claimed. This variety in interpretation indicates the weakness of a purely formal comparison, and yet it can be seen in the work of other writers as well.⁵ If social or political structures are viewed theoretically as the products of organizational problems in human society, it would seem more fruitful to obtain generalizations by examining the processes by which structures emerge from common sets of problems, rather than by simply studying the structures at any one point in time.

Perhaps the best known generalization concerning process and feudalism is that put forward by R. Coulborn: he sees feudalism as a form of government based on the lord-vassal relationship and a process of development based on the decay of a highly organized empire or centralized kingdom.⁶ Anyone familiar with the African material can see immediately that such a generalization does not hold for the African states, since very few if any of them are products of decaying empires or result from the breakdown of state

⁴ J. J. Macquet, "Une Hypothèse pour l'Étude des Féodalités Africaines," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, II, no. 6 (1961), 292-314.

⁵ S. F. Nadel, *Black Byzantium* (London, 1946); L. A. Fallers, *Bantu Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, 1956).

⁶ R. Coulborn, ed., *Feudalism in History* (Princeton, 1956).

centralization. Indeed, many historians would dispute its applicability to Europe as a whole.

Here then is the problem. If we define feudalism by structural type, it is soon apparent that the systems we wish to compare differ significantly in detail. If we use the generalization put forward by Coulborn,⁷ it does not apply to the African material. Yet there are, as Skinner suggests, many correspondences.⁸ In order to escape this dilemma, and to maintain the goal of comparability among societies we call "feudal," we should look for general processes that will apply to all of the cases now thought of as being possible examples of feudalism. These processes must be specific enough so that they can be used to explain the major structural variations which differentiate feudal societies from one another. Parenthetically, to suggest as Goody does⁹ that feudalism is not a useful concept in African studies begs the question. Some correspondences among a number of very widely separated societies around the world do exist, and Goody himself says that the "extent to which developments in Africa resembled those that occurred in Western Europe is certainly worth pursuing."¹⁰ Whether we call such resemblances feudal, centralized, or anything else is really irrelevant to the problem at hand—that of identifying the nature of the similarities and differences.

To begin with, let us start with the general model of feudalism put forward by Macquet.¹¹ There are three¹² important elements in Macquet's model:

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Skinner, "Analysis."

⁹ Jack Goody, "Feudalism in Africa," *Journal of African History*, IV (1963), 11.

¹⁰ Goody, "Feudalism," 16.

¹¹ Macquet, "Hypothèse."

¹² A fourth proposition by Macquet—that feudalism cannot be found in a despotic state—is too contentious at present to be useful. Thus H. Codere, in "Power in Ruanda," *Anthropologica*, IV (1962), 45-85, feels that Ruanda society was an extremely ruthless one, and indeed despotic, while Macquet, in *The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda* (New York, 1961), points out that the same society was based on a great deal of reciprocity between rulers and ruled.

- (1) An interpersonal bond involving unequal power between persons, with the superior giving protection, on the one hand, and the subordinate giving loyalty and service on the other.
- (2) A political system in which these feudal social relations are used as a basis for government.
- (3) Possible compatibility with the state or with a state that is breaking down.

These postulates, however, do not say very much about the processes that maintain such a system or that tend to propel its development in the direction of one set of alternatives. In this essay I should like to carry Macquet's thesis one step further by emphasizing a point already implicit in the model,¹³ namely that feudal social relations and feudal government are quite different and should be kept separate for purposes of analysis. When stressing this point we find that feudal social relations are based on a diffuse interpersonal bond between superiors and subordinates, and that the exact form of a feudal government is not a product of these relationships. By diffuse, I mean relationships involving many as opposed to very few activities. All varieties of feudal polities have these relationships and probably depend upon them as functional prerequisites, but so do other so-called nonfeudal polities such as modern Japan.¹⁴ In other words, this analysis is based on the proposition that feudal social bonds (item one in Macquet's model) and the type of government present in societies having such relations (item two) are related, but only to the extent that the governmental system is always made up of such social relations between persons. This is what Macquet means when he claims that feudal relations are a *basis* for government. On the other hand, as we shall see, whether there is more power at the center or less, whether there is trial by a man's peers or his superiors, and a host of other conditions, depend on factors not specifically noted by Macquet.

Examined theoretically and stripped of its medieval flavor, the feudal relationship involves two people, a superior and a subordi-

¹³ Macquet, "Hypothèse," 299.

¹⁴ I. Ishino, "The Oyabun-Kobun: A Japanese Ritual Kinship Institution," *American Anthropologist*, LV (1953), 695-704.

nate within a large interrelated network of these, in which the superior exchanges protection, economic security, and a position in the society in return for loyalty, obedience, and service from the subordinate. The maintenance and development of such a system of relations depends not on the governmental system so much as on personal insecurity, a lack of widespread use of payment for specific purposes, lack of adequate social control outside such relationships, and the inability of kinship units to perform all the required and desired services for individuals.

On the other hand, the government of a feudal society can vary in character. It may take a path of development that leads it toward greater fragmentation,¹⁵ or it may move toward increased centralization, as in the case of Kanem-Bornu. It is my hypothesis that fragmentation or centralization in feudal government is related to the manner in which succession disputes come to be settled, and the consequent effect that such developing customs have throughout the society upon the monarch's right of revocability. In other words, though feudal government may not necessarily be that of a decaying state,¹⁶ I am concerned to know why it does decay in some cases and not in others.

In what is to follow, material is presented to show that, both in Europe and among the Kanuri, feudal social relations depend on common social conditions. We shall also see that Europe, particularly France, and Bornu took alternate paths of political development within the common feudal framework because of differing developments in their succession rules and a correlated increase or decrease in the power of the monarch, and indeed of all superiors in the political organization.

The Kanem-Bornu state is one of the many empires that developed at the southern edge of the Sahara, as far as we know, during the first millennium A.D. It flourished in Kanem northeast of Lake Chad in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, during which its influence extended from Murzuk in the north to Kano on the west¹⁷

¹⁵ See Coulborn et al., *Feudalism*.

¹⁶ Macquet, "Hypothèse."

¹⁷ Y. Urvoy, "Histoire de l'Empire du Bornou," *Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*, VII (Dakar, 1949), fig. 3, p. 43.

and Darfur on the east.¹⁸ Essentially because of internal problems, the kingdom broke up and its power declined rapidly in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; the Kanuri emerged again in present-day Bornu and achieved a second strong empire in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. A second period of slow decline is supposed to have followed, and at the turn of the nineteenth century the Fulani *jihad* of northern Nigeria pressed hard on Bornu; this resulted in the rise to power of the Kanembu Shehus, who replaced the ancient dynasty and finally abolished the original royal line. The Shehus were in their turn toppled by Rabeh, a Sudanese slave raider, in 1893. However, he and his descendants were stopped in their attempts to found a third dynasty by advancing French colonial forces, and the Kanembu Shehus were restored after 1900.

The economy was based on peasant and slave agriculture, craft-work, and trade. The use of money was restricted right up to the colonial period,¹⁹ and there were never any salaried positions, as such. The king had final authority in the state, although the exercise of his power was tempered by the nobles, royal relatives, religious advisers, followers both slave and free, and strong national adversaries. Fiefs were given out to nobles and loyal followers; taxes were collected through the fiefs as well as by other means; and the populace was liable to military service under the nobles, who served as a cavalry force in the army. Military campaigns were an annual feature of state life during strong monarchies, though less frequent at other times. Personal relationships had always been of the feudal variety, encompassing all facets of society, and this continues into the present.

1. FEUDAL SOCIAL RELATIONS

In Europe of the ninth to eleventh centuries, neither the state nor the family could provide adequate security for the individual. Compared to other periods in the medieval era, these two centuries were generally marked by a sharp increase in disorder. Even the village community was barely strong enough to maintain order within its

¹⁸ A. J. Arkell, "The History of Darfur, 1200-1700: The Influence of Bornu," *Sudan Notes and Records*, no. 33 (1952), 129-155.

¹⁹ Ronald Cohen, "Some Aspects of Institutionalized Exchange: A Kanuri Example," *Cahier d'Etudes Africaine*, V, no. 19 (1965), 353-369.

borders, although the village did afford some protection against outsiders. Everywhere the weaker man felt the need of a protector, and even men with followings could not totally ensure their own positions without some connection to an even more powerful leader. The result of all this was that, over a period of time, there was built up an intricate system of personal relationships that interrelated all levels of the state into hierarchical relationships, in which loyalty and obedience were exchanged for benefits, protection, and justice.²⁰ Much of the economic organization was carried on through these same relationships, or ones very much like them, because money was not widely used and salaried positions were relatively rare.

In Bornu, the literature and the statements of older informants tell a uniform story. Social life in precolonial Bornu was similar in many respects to that of today, except for one overriding difference: personal security. A man had little or no protection against raiders, war service, robbers, overzealous tax collectors, and a judiciary that often favored those in authority. Ibn Fartua in his contemporary description of sixteenth-century Bornu military campaigns notes how villages were attacked, men killed, and wives and children taken as slaves.²¹ Over two centuries later Denham described this same method of warfare: "On attacking a place, it is the custom of the country instantly to fire it; and as they are all composed of straw huts only, the whole is shortly devoured by flames. The unfortunate inhabitants fly quickly from the destructive element, and fall immediately into the hands of their no less merciless enemies, who surround the place; the men are quickly massacred, and the women and children lashed together and made slaves."²² Later Denham witnessed the plundering after a battle in which two hundred wives and concubines of the opposing army were captured and distributed among the leaders of the Bornu army. Barth also describes scenes in northern and western Bornu in which whole towns were razed

²⁰ M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, L. A. Manyon, trans. (London, 1961), 142-150.

²¹ H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs* (Lagos, 1926), I, 63. It is significant that this reference refers to such action against Moslems, since it indicates that this was a general practice and not limited to pagans.

²² Major Denham and Captain Clapperton, *Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa* (London, 1826), I, 224.

by enemy forces,²³ and even situations where local political leaders "as soon as they have any debts to pay undertake a predatory excursion, often selling their own subjects."²⁴

Informants in remote Bornu hamlets during 1955-1957 called my attention to these facts and others like them during discussions concerning the coming of Nigerian independence. They exclaimed that life in Bornu before the British was terrible for the common peasant, Houses could be burned down, wives and daughters taken away, and goods or crops confiscated almost at will by political superiors. The only hope in such times, they said, was to have the protection of a powerful man, or to be under the leadership of a man who was in his turn the protected subordinate of another. Even then, changing fortunes and political upheaval made all personal attachments continually insecure.

In terms of every-day social life, this meant that families could be broken up at any time, either at home from raids or on the battlefield (to which a man brought at least one wife or female slave, and she her young children). To give some basis for residential and familial solidarity, it was habitual for the weaker to flock to the banners of the stronger. Leaders sought subservience, followers readily gave it, and frequent switching of loyalties became a necessary part of life. Thus Denham reported in the 1820s that, on the eastern boundaries of Bornu, townspeople "who have now . . . after military defeat . . . as if by magic, all become staunch supporters of the sheikh [Shehu Leminu]."²⁵ On a previous occasion, wives of the Bornu chiefs sent messengers to Denham privately, saying that they would come to him for protection if the Bornu army lost and if their husbands were killed.²⁶ On another occasion, deserters from the Bagirmi army to the east of Bornu led the Kanuri "to the pillage of their own brethren,"²⁷ and thirty years later, in the 1850s, Barth met a large number of Kanembu near the west bank of Lake Chad who had moved south into Bornu to obtain the protection of the

²³ H. Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa*, I (London, 1857), 211.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 553.

²⁵ Denham and Clapperton, *Travels*, II, 34.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 317.

Kanuri leaders.²⁸ Life was cheap, and the best, perhaps the only, protection was that to be obtained from the strong, the wealthy, and the powerful.²⁹

In the economic sphere, Barth reported that as late as the mid-nineteenth century currency was restricted, and that barter was still a widespread form of trade in the markets.³⁰ But only a small proportion of needs could be satisfied in the market place, and there were no salaries as we know them. Land, marriage, shelter, occupational training, and a host of other goods and services were, and to a large extent still are, obtained through organized superior-subordinate relationships. Since a person could not pay for these vital goods and services with a generalized currency, he used labor and obedience instead. In a complex society like that of the Kanuri, this is one of the few means of assuring the flow of goods and services. Thus all social relations, political, kinship, and economic, tended to be diffuse: a subordinate in any political or economic organization would not be at all surprised to find his superior arranging for his marriage or seeing that he obtained a plot of land or an occupation.

There were other conditions that support the continuation of these hierarchical relationships in Bornu, although they are somewhat peripheral to the present discussion. Perhaps the basic use of such relationships occurs in the Kanuri household organization. Here individuals could, and still do, join households as subordinates, and if they prove loyal and accept their subordination they even-

²⁸ Barth, *Travels*, II, 67.

²⁹ It is interesting to compare this generalization with that made by F. R. Wingate, *Mahdism and the Egyptian Sudan* (London, 1891), 74-75, when he described the actions of Sudanese troops during the Mahdist revolt: "Nothing is more extraordinary in the campaigns of the Great Pasha in the Bar el Ghazal than the facility with which the troops fought alternatively on his side, and on the side of Suliman Zubeir. Gessi would have one day 15,000 men in his army; but on the mere report of a stronger force being opposed to him, on the mere report that Suliman had found some means of success, 10,000 of these would be arrayed against him in Suliman's army. And in a like manner, when he inflicted a defeat upon Suliman, sometimes even before, so keenly did they watch the scale, he would at once enroll almost the whole army opposed to him." It should be remembered that Gessi Pasha was a European associate of Gordon's, and that Suliman Zubeir was the former superior of Rabeh who took a number of Suliman's troops and later conquered Bornu in 1893.

³⁰ Barth, *Travels*, II, 56.

tually obtain land, a wife, and a compound of their own, ideally close by within the expanding organization of the original household head. Kanuri towns, and probably Kanuri clans, developed in this way. Such relationships were also used for apprenticing boys to craftsmen. When the boy was to learn an occupation other than that of his father, he was placed in the household of a practitioner of the craft. Men who wished to get ahead in any field placed their services at the disposal of powerful men. The pattern was, and is, very similar for a large gamut of activities, including most important political positions. The person hoping to obtain a new and better position obtained acceptance as a *tada* (son, boy, subordinate, servant, follower) of the superior. At first he carried out very menial tasks while being watched carefully for signs of disloyalty. If he wished to stay and made a good impression, he was given a more responsible job; after years of service he might become quite an important person in his own right.

2. THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

In early medieval Europe, primogeniture resulted from the desire to preserve holdings intact, even though this form of succession ran counter to the "ordinary rules of the law of succession, which in the greater part of Europe favored the equality of heirs of the same degree."³¹ Although there was opposition at its inception, and varying paths to its general application, the rule was widely instituted throughout European society by the end of the twelfth century.

Before this time, an heir was customarily chosen from a group of eligibles if there was only one item, such as an office or a small fief. If there were a number of prerogatives, the heirs divided the estate among them. In both cases conflicts and competition could easily arise. In France, and for a short time in post-Conquest England, a system known as *parage* was introduced to solve such problems by the traditional rules of succession. The eldest brother among a group of sons paid homage to his deceased father's superiors, and thus assumed his father's responsibilities and status while accepting in his turn homage and subordination from his younger brothers for their portions of the estate. However, after several generations the

³¹ Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 203.

kin ties were so weak among the descendants of the original brothers that fragmentation occurred. Strict primogeniture finally became the rule. Fragmentation ceased, and disputes over succession were minimized by this jural delineation of a person among the possible heirs to whom the rights of succession must fall.³²

There was in Kanem-Bornu before the nineteenth century only a single dynasty, the Magumi Sefuwa, and this descent group is supposed to have held a ruling position for at least a thousand years. Unlike Europe, no rule of primogeniture ever developed in Kanem-Bornu, and every succession witnessed a competition among possible heirs to the throne. The basic criterion for succession was (and is) the kingly status of one's own father. In practice, the status of the mother's family and her personal character also helped to determine the choice, but the good opinion of the court was absolutely necessary. Thus in the 1884 succession, Urvoy notes that the court officials designated one heir (Abba Mustafa), then replaced him with his brother the next day, "probably because his investiture gifts . . . to the nobles . . . were too meagre."³³ Traditions record a tendency on the part of the monarch to designate his own successor. In Bornu there was a title (*chiroma*) given to the named heir-apparent, and in the nineteenth century Shehu Laminu named his sons in order of their priority to the throne while he was still alive. In practice, however, this designation never became a firmly entrenched part of the proceedings, at least not so firm as to stop competition for kingly office.

If the successions in the first dynasty are counted from ruler 16 (the first to have a named patrilineal relative) to number 72 on Urvoy's list, there are 15 successions from father to son and 41 from a monarch to a relative other than own son.³⁴ The average length of reign is 11.2 years for a father-son succession and 10.2 for others.³⁵ However, a large proportion of the very short reigns were begun by

³² *Ibid.*, 199-208.

³³ Urvoy, "Histoire," 113.

³⁴ Y. Urvoy, "Chronologie du Bornou," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, XI (1941), 21-31. This list was chosen before serious work was initiated on the various lists, because it gave the least confirmation to the thesis expressed here.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

nonfilial succession. There are 18 monarchs in this category who ruled for less than 5 years; only 4 rulers who obtained the throne from their fathers ruled for such a short time. Thus, although the average length of reign is somewhat similar, owing to a few long reigns by strong monarchs who obtained the throne from other than their own fathers, succession from father to son generally marked a more stable and longer-lasting reign for the successor. If this is so, why are there so many fewer of them than of the non-filial variety?

From a formal point of view, if no individual person in a lineage is appointed to the throne, and a rule exists that a successor's father has to be king, then competition between lineage segments is built into the system. This can be seen most clearly in the "times of trouble" between 1350 and 1470, in which 22 kings are listed, most of them with very short reigns. On several occasions the throne was held by usurpers; several kings were deposed by the *kaigama*, or head of the state military organization. There were also a number of assassinations, and civil as well as external wars. Thus members of the royal lineage and even nonmembers were ready to fight for the privileges of royalty. Indeed, the whole process of competition was self-accelerating in its intensity. As soon as there were more nonfilial relatives who obtained the throne, then an even greater number of next-generation descendants appeared to claim it (assuming that each succeeding generation of the dynasty produces a larger number of male offspring than the preceding one).

The only way such competition could diminish was when a strong man ruled for a long time, then passed the rule on to his son. Counting back only two generations from Ali Ghajedini (a late fifteenth-century monarch), there were eight lineage segments of the dynasty that lost their royal status. The fact that Ali Ghajedini, his son, and his grandson all succeeded one another, and altogether ruled for about seventy years, ensured their own line of continuity and caused many others extinction from the dynasty. This did not mean that these families lost all power in the state. The heads of these noble households supported themselves through income derived from the fiefs remaining to them, from their slave settlements throughout Bornu, and from commerce. At the same time, they attempted to maintain some influence in the state through judicious alignments and realignments to powerful or potentially powerful factions.

Indeed the "times of trouble" are supposed to have been triggered off by a revolt of the Bulala, from Lake Fitri east of Chad, who were led by a dissident segment of the Magumi Sefuwa dynasty that had lost its royal status early in Kanem history.³⁶ Even if this story is not true, it reflects the traditional Kanuri view that segments of the dynasty that lose their royal status are potential sources of revolt.

As noted, the competition could be diminished by a strong ruler; but it is equally important to note that it could never be stopped completely. There were always heirs beyond the filial ones. All of these possible successors were the heads of factions in the state. The moment any dislocating factor such as famine, disease, or unsuccessful warfare produced a threat to the state, the factions began to advance the cause of their leader in his claim to the throne. The death of a monarch produced competition among factions, and if no faction was stronger than another, then shorter or longer "times of trouble" could result.

Whether or not this tension was useful for the perpetuation of the state is beside the point; probably it worked both ways. A strong man of the dynasty, with the ability to enlist the support of large numbers of followers, would always have a chance to obtain control of the throne. On the other hand, there were succession disputes and civil wars that periodically destroyed the stability of the state. The tension between filial and nonfilial heirs was in turn determined by (1) the greater number of nonfilial heirs compared to filial ones for any ruler, (2) the external tensions facing the state, (3) the support that heirs could muster among the population and the nobles, and (4) the self-accelerating quality that produced an increasing number of heirs once the instability developed.

In the society as a whole, although details of succession disputes from other sources in the political system are less easily obtained, it is likely that all succession, especially in families having access to political power, was beset with the same difficulties. Some evidence for this point comes from the many stories of assassination and intrigue told to me about the family histories of present-day *ajia* (district heads). Some of these concerned relations between an-

³⁶ Barth, *Travels*, II, 640.

cestors of *ajia* and the monarch, but others pointed to competition among agnates for the office and prerogatives of a dead relative, especially between a dead man's brother and his son. Even today in Bornu, succession and inheritance disputes between a dead man's brothers and sons over property is one of the most common inheritance problems. Informants felt this to be a basic problem in their own society, claiming that its only resolution lay in a customary, but not jural, preference that sons should have rights over their parental uncles for their dead father's estate.

3. REVOCABILITY

One of the great turning points in the development of early European feudalism was the loss of the power of revocability by superiors. In the Lombard kingdom of northern Italy in the eleventh century, the conflict over revocability versus inheritable rights gave rise to a civil war, which was resolved, as the conflict was elsewhere, by the recognition that fiefs were inheritable rights within the family line of the holder. At first, superiors "insisted on the life character of a grant . . . [of a fief] and its constant revocability."³⁷ By the twelfth century, however, the conflict was over, and the rights of a superior, even if he were a king, had to give way to those of the vassal dynasties of patrimonies. This is one of the basic determinants in the development of fragmented power within the centralized state in the medieval period, for it deprived the king of his right to maintain loyalty and obedience through the constant threat of confiscation of the rights and privileges of his subordinates. It is interesting to note that this desire to build up large consolidated patrimonial holdings led to both subinfeudation and to a plurality of superiors for subordinate lords and nobles. Because of the real possibility of warfare between one's superiors, this characteristic resulted eventually in the restriction of obligations between feudal subordinates and their superiors, which led to what we know today as rent, and to the inception of more specific ties between lords and vassals.³⁸

There are indications that the trend in Bornu was exactly the reverse of that in Europe. In early Kanem, the exact details of

³⁷ Bloch, *Feudal Society*, 198.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 208-218.

government organization are not at all clear. However, Urvoy does feel that members of the royal lineage always had certain territories reserved for themselves, of which they were the "uncontested masters."³⁹ Formally these territories were given for life, but it seems that in reality they may have been held for long periods of time by royal lineage segments, as patrimonies. Barth⁴⁰ recounts traditions which suggest that the early Kanem monarchy was strongly limited in power by a council of twelve nobles, without whose assent nothing could be undertaken by the king.⁴¹ After their expulsion from Kanem in the fifteenth century, the Kanuri monarchs created a large number of honorific titles for their close relatives, but "strained to empty these of all territorial powers."⁴² Traditions suggest that Ali Ghajedeni (late fifteenth century) kept the nobles in his new capital of Birni Ngazargamo and broke up their estates. The various regions of the kingdom, and the administrative hierarchy from a regional level upward, he tried to put into the hands of his own followers, "whose modest origins made them totally dependent upon the prince."⁴³ It should also be noted that in theory, if not in practice, all titles in Bornu have always been revocable by the monarch, although granted to the incumbent for life.⁴⁴

Exactly how old the fief system of precolonial Bornu may be is difficult to document. However, it is quite apparent from all accounts that it involved the fragmenting of holdings (with the notable exception of the *galidima* of northwest Bornu, who held a border territory). Nobles living in the capital were given rights to tax villages spread over the entire kingdom. These were administered by *chima gana*, or subordinates of the fief holder who resided in the fief. Furthermore, other titled persons, who were the heads of ethnic groups or clan groupings were often given the right to a small tax from members of their group in a number of specified villages. This hierarchy seems to have cut across villages considered as units, so that one village might contain several of these ethnic or

³⁹ Urvoy, "Chronologie," 38.

⁴⁰ Barth, *Travels*, II, 647.

⁴¹ Arkell, "History of Darfur," 137.

⁴² Urvoy, "Chronologie," 38.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

clan groups. Whether or not this tax form represents an earlier form of social organization is a tantalizing question. The important point for this discussion, however, is the fact of fragmentation, which made it impossible for anyone beneath the monarch to obtain territorially based subordination.

The development of revocability in Bornu was in all likelihood hastened by the displacement of the older Sefuwa dynasty by that of the Kanembu Shehus.⁴⁵ Many of the ancient titles that persisted into the second dynasty of the nineteenth century were given as "decorations to esteemed followers."⁴⁶ For example, the title of *kaigama*, formerly chief military leader of the state, and a noble whose antecedents had often deposed monarchs, was given to a minor chief, while the official functions were taken over by Kachella Bilal, a slave follower.⁴⁷ The title of *yerima*, a powerful noble in the Magumi Sefuwa court who administered the northern part of the kingdom, existed by name only. His functions were taken over by the *digma*, a title given to a household slave of the ruler. On the other hand, the two eunuch titles of very high rank in the old kingdom, that of the *yuroma* and the *mustrema*, were kept as slave titles and even gained in importance and power.⁴⁸ In other words, titles were for the most part placed in the hands of followers personally loyal to the Shehu, rather than in the hands of noble members of the realm who might revolt and threaten the monarch.

That the Shehu did have dramatic powers of revocability can be seen in an episode observed by Denham in northern Bornu in 1823.⁴⁹ A chief slave follower of Shehu Laminu, Barca Gana, who had many male and female slaves of his own, and a number of districts of the kingdom under his control, was stripped of all power and ordered by the Shehu to be sold as a common slave, after he had reacted resentfully to a royal request. Although this order was later rescinded because of the entreaties of other courtiers, it seems clear that the monarch had a right to do just as he wished with the

⁴⁵ Urvoy, "Histoire," 100.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴⁹ Denham and Clapperton, *Travels*, I, 235-237.

rank of his subordinates, if there was any hint of insubordination. There is no evidence that his right was challenged.

According to Benton, part of the investiture ceremony of a Shehu involved the giving of districts to various titled officials.⁵⁰ Thus in 1880, when a follower of the dead Shehu Umar gave the robes of office and other regalia to Umar's son Bukar, thus making him the new monarch, the follower is supposed to have said, according to a traditional custom, "What province will you give me?" This particular province was presumably an area not previously under this courtier's jurisdiction. Such redistribution by revocation and reallocation serves, of course, to maintain some of the relations between the throne and those most closely associated with it, but it also indicates the final authority that the monarch had over the appointment of state officers.

Further documentation of this point, showing its extension throughout the political system, comes from the 1920 report of a perplexed young British official, who was assigned the task of finding the rightful claimants to districts (fiefs) and village headships. He reported that there was practically no evidence of hereditary rights to political office in Bornu. Instead, "these were held by the Chimas (fief holders) simply during the pleasure of the Shehu, and were liable to be taken away and bestowed elsewhere on the slightest excuse. A son of the Shehu, a slave, a free born noble, are to be found following each other as the holders of single fiefs. And with or without change in the holder of a fief the size of the fief was liable to be changed, towns in the original fief being taken away and given to another fief holder."⁵¹

4. CONCLUSION

This analysis suggests that in Europe the development of primogeniture and feudal patrimonies from the twelfth century onward meant that it was impossible for superiors to enforce obedience through the threat of revocation of a subordinate's rights and privi-

⁵⁰ P. A. Benton, trans., *The Sultanate of Bornu*, by A. Schultze (London, 1913), 275.

⁵¹ J. R. Patterson, "Report on Magumeri District" (MS), in Magumeri District Notebook, Provincial Office, Maiduguri, Bornu Province, Nigeria.

leges. In Bornu, exactly the reverse situation obtained. The monarch gained office as one individual among a group of eligibles. Throughout most of Bornu history, traditions record that father-son succession occurred in only a minority of cases. Thus a new monarch was often faced with a potentially disloyal administration because of its attachment to another branch of the royal family. This led to the increased use and reliance on personal followers for government offices as against nobles and royal relations, and thus to such a strengthening of the royal powers of revocability that monarchs, and by custom all superiors, could replace disloyal subordinates with loyal ones. The process was accelerated greatly by the need of the Kanembu Shehus in the early nineteenth century to found a new dynasty upon the remains of an older one.

To close with some points of general interest: Feudal societies are ones in which relationships are typically of the so-called lord-vassal variety. The maintenance of this relationship does not depend upon the structure of feudal government. It is dependent, however, upon (1) forces that create insecurity in continuous interpersonal relations, such as warfare and slave raiding, and (2) forces that tend to make interpersonal relations diffuse rather than specific, such as a lack of salaried positions and currency, that is, forces tending to increase rather than diminish the number of activities involved in an interpersonal relationship.

The central structure of feudal government is primarily a result of the means by which succession problems come to be solved, at the level of jural rules governing the selection of new offices. This problem exists in all feudal societies. In some, probably the minority of cases, succession is settled by giving a lineage, and through primogeniture one person within the lineage, the right to succeed to the power, territory, and office of another. This includes the monarchy but is most strongly supported by the king's subordinates and leads to the fragmentation of the state through the building up of noble patrimonies. In other feudal societies, like Bornu, the succession to the office of monarch remains a choice among a group of eligibles. This leads to competition and the maintenance of royal revocability, so that state positions can be used as rewards for loyalty to the monarch. This becomes the pattern for all relations,

and the state itself is maintained as a centralized expansionist monarchy.

Indeed, in the light of this analysis, a great deal of European feudalism after the twelfth century was not so feudal after all—that is, if we think of the lord-vassal relationship and its ideology as central to the definition. Once the superior lost the power of revocability, the lord-vassal relationship became more and more of an empty form, and this applies to most of the medieval period. In a society like Bornu, however, the superior has always had the right to withdraw his support from a subordinate, and this has maintained the strength of superior-subordinate relations throughout the country's entire history.

IV

Charles de Vienne and the
Frere Mission to Zanzibar

by

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IN 1873, SIR BARTLE FRERE arrived in Zanzibar, sent by the British government to negotiate with the sultan, Sayyid Barghash, a treaty to end the export of slaves from the mainland dominions of the sultan to his islands of Zanzibar and Pemba, the only legal sea-borne slave trade then permitted in the territories under his control.¹ Frere left Zanzibar without accomplishing his mission, and, according to a noted scholar, "the honour of thwarting Frere's diplomacy was a Frenchman's."² This Frenchman was Charles de Vienne, consul at Zanzibar.

Any analysis of De Vienne's role in the negotiations of 1873 must take into consideration the extended period of friction between the British and French in Zanzibar. Although the British were never seriously challenged, the French consuls in Zanzibar, often going beyond their instructions,³ did furnish British representatives with grounds for believing that France had designs upon the island. In 1862, both powers agreed by treaty to respect the independence of the sultanate, but this did not put an end to their mutual mistrust of each other's motives.⁴ Britain's policy was aimed at suppressing the slave trade in East African waters, and the French regarded it, with much justification, as a calculated political device: the British could gain control of Zanzibar while at the same time avowing that

¹ For the treaties regulating the slave trade, R. Coupland, *East Africa and Its Invaders* (Oxford, 1938), 186ff.

² R. Coupland, *The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-1890* (London, 1939), 195.

³ This opinion is based upon the dispatches concerning East Africa in the Zanzibar file of the Archives des Affaires Etrangères (AAE), Paris, and the files of the Ministère de la Marine (MM), held in the Archives de l'Ancien Ministère de la France d'Outre-Mer, Paris.

⁴ J. D. Hargreaves has said of the British and French in Africa: "consciousness of cultural differences and memories of recent political traditions might still prevent mutual confidence between individuals," in *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (London, 1963), 104.

humanitarian considerations ruled all their actions.⁵ Britain actually had no serious thought of annexation in this period, but her diplomats saw no reason why a policy designed to end the slave trade should not contribute to the over-all aim of British supremacy in the western Indian Ocean through the power this policy gave over the sultan of Zanzibar.⁶

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Charles de Vienne arrived in Zanzibar to face this uneasy situation in mid-1869. The French then had no definite information about British plans for a renewed effort against the slave trade, but they had apprehensions of such a move. Bishop Maupoint of Réunion, who was in close contact with the French missionaries then working in the sultan's dominions,⁷ sent his views to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a step arising from information he had secured of a potential combination of the British and French consuls to end the public sale of slaves in Zanzibar. The bishop reminded the ministry of the alleged abuses committed by the Royal Navy in its efforts to deal with the slave trade of the Indian Ocean as proof of Britain's hypocrisy on this issue⁸ and, in general, gave the advice that any joint move by the two nations would serve only to weaken the independence of Zanzibar, a development that would strengthen the already dominant British position in East Africa.⁹ De Vienne agreed.¹⁰

As De Vienne gained experience in Zanzibar, he became even more convinced that his country should not cooperate with Britain.

⁵ The Americans in Zanzibar held similar views. See N. R. Bennett, *Studies in East African History* (Boston, 1963), 34-35; for French suspicions, see, for example, Jablonski to Drouyn de Lhuys, March 25, 1865, *Politique, Zanzibar*, t. 3, AAE.

⁶ For British policy, see Roland Robinson and John Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians* (New York, 1961), 41ff.

⁷ Bennett, *Studies*, 54ff.

⁸ For this problem, see *ibid.*, 33-34; Raymond Decary, *L'Isle Nosy Bé de Madagascar* (Paris, 1960), 50ff; Owen Chadwick, *Mackenzie's Grave* (London, 1959), 10-12.

⁹ "Note pour le Ministre," Nov. 20, 1869, *Polit., Zanz.*, t. 3.

¹⁰ De Vienne to Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), April 21, 1870, *ibid.*, t. 4.

Positive that any measures against the slave trade would damage the authority of the sultan, he went so far as to inform the British representative, John Kirk, that his acts of interference could be interpreted as violating the treaty of 1862. Kirk reported to his government De Vienne's refusal to discuss the matter, a decision certain to increase the suspicions of his French counterpart. In addition, according to Kirk, De Vienne began to talk to the sultan about resisting the constant pressure.¹¹ Thus De Vienne was led to follow a policy in Zanzibar that ran counter to official French policy in that area: the consul had, in 1870, presented a dispatch to the sultan from his government stating its disapproval of the slave trade.¹² But he now felt compelled to act differently, since he saw the chief rivals of his country gaining additional influence over the sultan through their action against the slave trade.¹³

De Vienne returned to France in 1872 as the British Foreign Office initiated steps that culminated in the Frere mission to Zanzibar.¹⁴ Dispatches were sent to British representatives in countries with interests in East Africa—France, the United States, Germany, Portugal—instructing the diplomats to inform the governments concerned that the state of the slave trade in that region was “altogether unsatisfactory.” The representatives were to emphasize that action was necessary to negotiate a new treaty since the previous agreement, that of 1845, was obviously not working; an estimated 16,000 slaves a year were leaving Zanzibar ports for the slave markets to the north, in spite of its provisions. They were then to ask for the cooperation of each country in rectifying the situation, stressing the fact that Britain preferred a joint effort to force the sultan to act.¹⁵

¹¹ Kirk to De Vienne, June 6, 1871, E-61; Kirk to Foreign Office (FO), June 6, 1871, *ibid.*; De Vienne to Kirk, June 12, 1872, E-55, Zanzibar Archives (ZA); De Vienne to MAE, July 12, 1871, with enclosures, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

¹² De Vienne to MAE, Oct. (?), 1870, *ibid.*

¹³ See, for example, De Vienne to MAE, June 10, 1871, and July 12, 1871, *ibid.* Other grounds for suspicion were the sending of slaves taken from Arab vessels to a British estate in Zanzibar. See De Vienne to MAE, June 2, 1871, *ibid.*

¹⁴ The background to the Frere mission is given in R. J. Gavin, “The Bartle Frere Mission to Zanzibar, 1873,” *The Historical Journal*, V (1962), 122-148.

¹⁵ Granville to the British representatives in France, etc., Feb. 16, 1872, FO 84/1386, Public Record Office, London.

In France, after some delay caused by the vagueness of the British dispatch, the foreign minister, De Rémusat, promised the assistance of his country.¹⁶ Instructions were soon on the way explaining the new policy to the acting consul, Alphonse Bertrand. The minister noted that France had agreed to assist the British in this antislave-trade endeavor because France, after all, was as much against the trade as Britain. He pointed out that, though the French government did not know the exact details of the treaty Frere was bringing to the sultan, it would probably not be incompatible with the independence of that ruler. Bertrand was instructed to use his full influence in aiding Frere, while simultaneously investigating and reporting back to France all of Frere's doings in Zanzibar.¹⁷

But, at the same time, De Rémusat was trying to learn the details of Frere's instructions. Lord Granville accepted this desire as valid and promised to have Frere communicate them to the French government so that more precise instructions could be sent to Zanzibar.¹⁸ Frere stopped in Paris on his way to Zanzibar to meet with De Rémusat; but their conversations were not very fruitful, Frere reporting that the minister informed him there were no available copies of the instructions sent to Bertrand. Frere concluded: "I took leave of His Excellency under the impression that no very active cooperation was to be expected from the French Government."¹⁹

The attitude of the French is understandable, since they never had received clear information on Frere's plans. But De Rémusat did demonstrate his desire to cooperate by informing Frere that De Vienne was then in Paris and that, if the consul were informed of the nature of the British instructions, he would do everything possible to aid the mission. Frere rather curtly noted that he merely sent the British ambassador, Lord Lyons, a memorandum contain-

¹⁶ De Rémusat to Sackville West, Oct. 31, 1872, in Sackville West to Granville, Nov. 5, 1872, FO 84/1387.

¹⁷ MAE to Bertrand, Nov. 24, 1872, Polit., Zanz., t. 4. See also De Rémusat to Pothuau, Nov. 6, 1872, OI 14/56, Archives de l'Ancien Ministère d'Outre-Mer. This dossier contains much information on French suspicions of British policy in East Africa.

¹⁸ Granville to Lyons, Nov. 14, 1872, Lyons to Granville, Nov. 15, 1872, FO 84/1387.

¹⁹ Frere to Granville, Nov. 24, 1872, FO 84/1385.

ing the points he considered useful for the consul; then he left Paris, feeling there was nothing further to be gained. The contents of his memorandum affirmed that the sultan was violating the treaty of 1845 and that Britain was determined to end this situation; the sultan was to be urged to prohibit the sale of slaves in public markets; all Zanzibari vessels violating the new agreement would be seized and condemned; and Britain desired the French to take action to prevent the abuse of her flag by slave traders.²⁰ This reply, however, did not detail the steps that would be taken to secure these ends, an omission that troubled the French since the course followed would affect the sultan's independence. The British ambassador recognized the unsatisfactory nature of the reply by asking his government for a sketch of Frere's instructions so that the French could send out similar orders to Zanzibar.²¹

Because of Frere's attitude, the French sent no further instructions to Zanzibar. The omission was not too important, however, since De Vienne was to return to Zanzibar as consul, agreeing when the ministry asked him to reconsider his earlier decision to leave that post.²² He was given a dispatch to the sultan expressing France's interest in ending the slave trade,²³ but his own instructions from De Rémusat were somewhat less than positive. The minister passed on what information the British had provided, adding that France did not differ from Britain in its goal—the ending of the slave trade. Then De Rémusat added a reservation: "we naturally reserve our freedom of judgement on the means of attaining the desired result." He thought this necessary owing to his fear that Britain would leave the sultan with only a shadow of his former authority. French policy, De Rémusat concluded, aimed at a solution leading to effective measures against the slave trade without interfering with

²⁰ *Ibid.*, enclosing the memorandum dated Nov. 24, 1872. Other secondary matters mentioned were the establishing of stations for the landing of captured slaves and the taking of steps to prevent Indians from holding slaves. The complaint against slavers abusing the French flag had often formed the subject of dispatches in the years before the Frere mission. See Kirk to Gonne, April 10, 1869, E-57, Tucker to Cumming, June 14, 1872, E-55, ZA.

²¹ Lyons to Granville, Nov. 25, 1872, FO 84/1387.

²² De Rémusat to De Vienne, Dec. 19, 1872, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

²³ Président de la République to Sultan of Zanzibar, Jan. 12, 1873, *ibid.*

Zanzibar's independence—in other words, a solution in accord with the treaty of 1862.²⁴

2

Frere arrived in Zanzibar on January 12, 1873. During the next few weeks frequent discussions were held with the Zanzibari government, but with no appreciable result. Sultan Barghash recognized his difficult position; he said that he was given the choice of “sealing the doom of his country [by ending the slave trade] or incurring the displeasure of the British.” But the British kept pressing, and by early February John Kirk was convinced that the sultan was coming round to their side. Then on February 11, Barghash gave the British a decided refusal, an action they claimed was prompted by the assurance given by De Vienne, only recently arrived, that France would act to preserve the sultan's independence.²⁵

It is understandable that the British reacted in this way. When Frere's party arrived in Zanzibar, it did not receive an overly friendly reception from the resident consuls, all of them being very suspicious of British motives. Bertrand, who had received no instructions, largely because of the delays caused by Frere in Paris, was forced to tell the mission that he could not act without them.²⁶ The British, of course, had to bear the blame for this delay.²⁷ De Vienne arrived in the midst of the impasse, on February 9, to resume control of the consulate. He asked Frere to allow him a delay of three days so that he could be brought up to date on Zanzibari affairs by Bertrand, who was returning to France, before discussing methods of procedure for the negotiations. But this decision led to an extremely poor result. Frere sent an aide, Clement Hill, to visit De Vienne, and the two had an unfortunate meeting. The suspicious

²⁴ MAE to De Vienne, Jan. 13, 1873, *ibid.* See also the minister's wish that the French navy be represented in Zanzibar during the Frere mission, again based on fears of British motives, in MAE to MM, Feb. 11, 1873, *ibid.*

²⁵ Coupland, *Exploitation*, 186-196; Gavin, “Frere Mission,” 145.

²⁶ Frere to Granville, Jan. 14, 1873, FO 84/1389; De Vienne to Frere, March 14, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4, states that the full instructions did not arrive until March 9, 1873.

²⁷ The Americans also complained of a similar lack of information. Bennett, *Studies*, 37-38.

British official pressed De Vienne on the delay in meeting Frere; then he asked if his instructions authorized him to work for the immediate abolition of the slave trade. According to Hill, De Vienne declined an answer to the latter question, but intimated they did not; moreover, he refused to exchange instructions with Frere, even though Hill informed him of the British plans.²⁸ De Vienne, in view of his instructions, could go no further without knowing whether the British planned to use force to secure their aims. Kirk, in a separate dispatch, supported Hill and, at the same time, reported that there were rumors in Zanzibar that France was opposed to British demands.²⁹

De Vienne reported differently concerning his meeting with the British. He had finally visited Frere on February 14, but he stated that, although courteously received, he was given no information about Frere's mission and was not told what cooperation was expected from the French.³⁰ This shifting of the blame to the British was not accepted by Frere: when he sent home his version of the visit, he claimed that De Vienne had delayed visiting him until just before he was preparing to leave Zanzibar for a visit to areas south of the island. Frere said the long delay had made any French cooperation useless and, in addition, noted that De Vienne came to visit unofficially so that it was not possible to talk on positive action for the future. Frere continued that the French consul made no reference to Hill's visit or to Frere's earlier efforts to meet him, concluding that he had not felt it necessary to impart any information on his plans.³¹

²⁸ Hill's memo of Feb. 10, 1873, in Frere to Granville, Feb. 10, 1873; Frere to Granville, Feb. 1, 1873; De Vienne to Frere, March 17, 1873, in Frere to Granville, March 24, 1873, FO 84/1389.

²⁹ Kirk to FO, March 17, 1873, FO 84/1374. Bishop Steere of the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) reported the rumors: "They [the Arabs] say that the French Consul has told Seyed Barghash not to mind what the English say for . . . the other Europeans don't go along with them." Steere to Ann Steere, March 13, 1873, Diocese of Zanzibar, A. 1, I, Archives of UMCA, London.

³⁰ De Vienne to De Rémusat, Feb. 27, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4. For his protest on this treatment, see De Vienne to Frere, March 13, 1873, in De Vienne to De Rémusat, March 17, 1873, *ibid.*

³¹ Frere to Granville, March 24, 1873, FO 84/1389.

This impasse resulted from two factors: the mutual suspicions of the two powers, and the apparent sudden change in the attitude of the sultan upon the arrival of De Vienne. The first point has been amplified sufficiently, but the second needs investigation. It was natural that the British, not taking their own conduct into account, should hold the French official responsible for the unfavorable turn in the negotiations. But is there any justification for placing responsibility for the sultan's attitude on De Vienne? It appears that the consul did act somewhat equivocally after his arrival. He delayed a few days in presenting the sultan with the French president's letter on the ending of the slave trade, but this was largely because of his suspicion of the still unclear plans of the British regarding their proposals for Zanzibar. De Vienne's letters demonstrate clearly that he believed that the British, by working against the slave trade, would upset the economic life of the island and, in the end, either seize Zanzibar or ruin its prosperity.³² In the light of his ambiguous instructions to help to maintain Zanzibar's independence, he could not freely support Frere. The French consul's course was understandable in view of past friction between the two powers, but it no doubt gave the sultan the hope that, if he resisted the British, he might depend on the aid of the French.

Yet De Vienne did seem to resist being driven too far by the sultan in any effort to play off England against France for Zanzibar's advantage. He counseled the sultan against going to Paris, where the French president would be asked to arbitrate the dispute. De Vienne of course had no orders for such an action, but he foresaw that the move would not be welcomed by his superiors.³³ The consul limited his actions to reporting his suspicions to Paris: that England was pushing for violent measures he could not join and that Kirk, whom he considered to favor violent solutions, was pushing Frere to that end.³⁴

Whatever De Vienne's motives, the British began to press their complaints to the French government concerning his actions. In

³² De Vienne to De Rémusat, Feb. 12, 1873, Feb. 27, 1873, March 28, 1873, *Polit., Zanz.*, t. 4.

³³ De Vienne to De Rémusat, Apr. 10, 1873, *ibid.*

³⁴ De Vienne to S'Hilaire, Apr. 10, 1873, in S'Hilaire to De Rémusat, May 5, 1873, *ibid.*

the view of Lord Lyons, De Rémusat appeared "very much surprised and displeased" to learn of his consul's activities, but the foreign minister added that he had no information from his own sources on which to base a judgment.³⁵ When the British continued their complaints, De Rémusat replied that he had renewed his order to De Vienne and had requested the British to inform him fully of any further instance of his consul's hindering actions.³⁶ De Rémusat then wrote to Zanzibar, plainly informing the consul that his attitude seemed to be violating instructions and that he regretted the delay in visiting Frere, since it had led to an unfavorable British interpretation of French motives. De Vienne was ordered to take appropriate steps to end the slave trade, avoiding measures that would throw doubt on France's opposition to the trade.³⁷

Granville continued to press, informing Lyons that De Vienne, whatever his instructions, "has done all he can to thwart" the Frere mission. Granville concluded that the French official's refusal to call on Frere could have but one interpretation—that of French opposition to the mission. Thus he instructed Lyons to secure further explanations of De Vienne's actions, in the hope that the consul would in the end be disavowed by Paris.³⁸ De Rémusat countered this by reporting that a De Vienne dispatch mentioned only "a slight misunderstanding" between himself and Frere on the exchange of visits, the result being "a certain coolness somewhat embarrassing to their subsequent relations." De Rémusat continued that this information was not specific enough to cause him to reprimand De Vienne; rather, he requested any additional information the British might have. But in spite of this attitude, he did say that perhaps De Vienne had been compromised by the earlier actions of Bertrand and that the consul was possibly "entangled in the cause of interests hostile to the policy he is now instructed to obey." De Rémusat promised to recall De Vienne if this suspicion proved justified.³⁹

When more news arrived from Zanzibar, De Rémusat decided in

³⁵ Lyons to Granville, March 7, 1873, FO 84/1392.

³⁶ Lyons to Granville, March 18, 1873, *ibid.*

³⁷ MAE to De Vienne, March 13, 1873, and March 24, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

³⁸ Granville to Lyons, April 11, 1873, FO 84/1392.

³⁹ Lyons to Granville, April 18, 1873, *ibid.*

favor of his representative. He considered that, if De Vienne had done little or nothing to aid Frere, he had also done nothing to block him. De Rémusat asserted that Frere's mission had "virtually failed" in any case, for by the time of De Vienne's return the real culprit was the sultan, who had tried to gain something from the rivalry of Britain and France. But De Rémusat also showed himself in sympathy with the sultan, whom he considered as having justifiable fears that his independence was threatened by Britain, so much so that the ruler of Zanzibar even wished "to place himself under the exclusive protection of France," a request France would not meet. De Rémusat concluded this interview with Lyons by saying that perhaps the alternatives presented by the sultan were worth considering, particularly his proposal to allow a regulated number of slaves to enter Zanzibar each year for local use.⁴⁰

British officials did not accept this reasoning. G. M. Wylde, of the Foreign Office, noted that Frere had considered his mission to be progressing favorably until De Vienne's arrival. To Wylde, "the hereditary policy of the French at Zanzibar . . . [had] been opposition to everything English," a course followed by Bertrand and De Vienne. He concluded that it would be "a perfect absurdity" to accept the sultan's proposal to allow a fixed number of slaves legally to enter Zanzibar.⁴¹ As Granville pointed out, such a policy would be difficult to regulate and would lead to continued suffering for the African inhabitants of the continent.⁴²

3

Thus the British continued to make demands in Paris, achieving finally a measure of success when De Rémusat gave assurances that the sultan could expect no support from France: both nations equally opposed the slave trade, although they might differ on the means to combat it.⁴³ But De Rémusat moderated his criticism of De

⁴⁰ Lyons to Granville, May 6, 1873, FO 84/1393; Sultan of Zanzibar to Président de la République, March 27, 1873, in De Vienne to De Rémusat, March 28, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

⁴¹ Wylde note, May 8, 1873, FO 84/1393.

⁴² Granville to Lyons, June 10, 1873, *ibid.*

⁴³ Granville to the British Agent in Aden, May 21, 1873, Granville to Lyons, May 26, 1873, Lyons to Granville, May 26, 1873, enclosing De Rémusat to Lyons, May 22, 1873, *ibid.*

Vienne somewhat as the British continued to speak against him, informing the French consul he was not ready to accept the accusations blaming the failure of the mission on him, and asserting that De Vienne might have been right in trying to prevent the violent means he suspected Britain of planning. However, De Rémusat continued, the British were so aroused that he regretted the consul's delays, especially since the sultan's letter to the French president made it look as if France were encouraging the sultan to resist. De Rémusat hoped that perhaps De Vienne could get the negotiations moving again, thus ending the diplomatic quarrel.⁴⁴

De Vienne assured De Rémusat that he would follow orders, saying with some truth that it was an exaggeration to believe France had the power to block anything the British wanted in Zanzibar. The consul added that he had been instructed not only to act against the slave trade, but also as far as possible to safeguard Zanzibar's independence.⁴⁵

The controversy over a new treaty was brought to a conclusion in June 1873, when the sultan was given an ultimatum by Kirk, with the support of the American and German representatives.⁴⁶ The sultan immediately asked De Vienne, on June 4, to meet and discuss it. The consul went, accompanied by a French missionary, who joined him at his request. De Vienne told the sultan he had not come to discuss British affairs and could only state the French view on the slave trade—its abolition. The sultan's previous arguments against the British, De Vienne continued, had been referred home, along with his request for French arbitration, but no replies had yet been received.⁴⁷ There was only one course, De Vienne said, that he could recommend: the sultan should request the rulers of European countries to arbitrate the affair, promising his immediate compliance with the solution reached.⁴⁸ The sultan was not very

⁴⁴ De Rémusat to De Vienne, May 7, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

⁴⁵ De Vienne to De Rémusat, May 10, 1873, and June 3, 1873, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ Kirk to Granville, June 5, 1873, FO 84/1374.

⁴⁷ The French government did not accept the proposals. S'Hilaire to De Rémusat, May 13, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

⁴⁸ P. Baur's letter of June 6, 1873, in *Les Missions Catholiques*, V (1873), 328; De Vienne to De Rémusat, June 6, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

happy with this decision, but finding no support among the other consuls⁴⁹ he submitted to the British on June 5, 1873. The French government, although regretting what it considered British extremism, expressed general satisfaction with the treaty⁵⁰ and prepared to return to its policy of noninvolvement in Zanzibar.⁵¹

In the British view, it was clear that the French government had "behaved badly" in an effort to improve its position on the island. Kirk firmly believed this, asserting that the sultan had abused De Vienne for leading him on with false hopes.⁵² The British historian of Zanzibar, Coupland, accepts this opinion, judging that it was virtually certain that the French were "trying to revive the policy of 1859," the policy of striving for predominance.⁵³

But these opinions cannot be accepted without reservations. De Vienne, faced with the threat of possible British moves to gain greater control of the affairs of Zanzibar, could quite understandably say: "I believe that the road followed leads most clearly to the taking possession of Zanzibar rather than to the abolition of slavery."⁵⁴ As long as there was a danger that Britain might intervene by force in Zanzibar, De Vienne had no course but to act as he did. The British did not, of course, recognize this danger. And, less justifiably, they did not comment adversely on Frere's behavior, both in Paris and Zanzibar, which further stimulated French fears. De Vienne may have lacked tact in dealing with the problem, but the weak British effort in allaying suspicions developed over many

⁴⁹ Bennett, *Studies*, 38; Kirk to Schultz, June 5, 1873, Han/3, Z.A.

⁵⁰ MAE to De Vienne, July 1, 1873, Aug. 27, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

⁵¹ For later French policy, N. R. Bennett, "Some Notes on French Policy in Buganda and East Africa: 1879-1890," *Makerere Journal*, VI (1962), 1-17.

⁵² Kirk to Wylde, July 3, 1873, FO 84/1375. Bishop Steere reported the interview: "Then he [Barghash] turned to the French Consul and said, you have done all this, if you had let me consent when Sir Bartle Frere was here I should have got money and ships and lots of things. Now I get nothing . . . They say the French Consul could only reply that he had always understood that the Arabs bore reverses with more dignity than Europeans but now he found that it was quite the other way." From Steere to Ann Steere, July 4, 1873, Diocese of Zanzibar, A. 1, III, UMCA Archives. See also De Vienne to De Rémusat, June 6, 1873, Polit., Zanz., t. 4.

⁵³ Coupland, *Exploitation*, 207.

⁵⁴ De Vienne to Com. Naval Station, May 5, 1873, *ibid.*

years of friction must remove from him any onus for opposing the aims of the Frere mission. Unfortunately for De Vienne's hopes, France, by its refusal to resist British pressures, convinced anyone who may still have had doubts that it was second to its rival in the political life of Zanzibar.

V

The Tokolor Empire of Ségou and
Its Relations with the French

by

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NEW STATES IN AFRICA have generally been quick to identify themselves with earlier rulers in their territories who have won fame by resisting the imposition of European rule. Samori in Guinea, Ja Ja in eastern Nigeria, Bai Bureh in Sierra Leone—all enjoy posthumous honor from the descendents of men whom they opposed in their lifetimes. In northern Nigeria there is a more direct continuity of tradition between pre- and postcolonial rulers. Only where honoring the resisters might encourage divisions within the modern state—as in the case of Ashanti—is this form of piety normally discouraged.

In the case of the Republic of Mali, a powerful African state, created in the 1850s, preserved its independence until after 1890, within maximum boundaries not unlike those of the republic (though stopping well short of them in the north and east). Several western writers have suggested reasons why the present rulers might be glad to claim some continuity of succession with the empire founded by Al-Hajj 'Umar al-Tal, the Tokolor warrior of the Tijanniyya fraternity. Thomas Hodgkin and Ruth Schachter classify this with other Islamic states founded in the nineteenth century, as serving the ends of political unification, social leveling, and resistance to European encroachments—all causes generally favored in modern West Africa.¹ Elsewhere Hodgkin groups 'Umar with "the political ancestors of the revolutionaries and radicals of this generation;"² while Suret-Canale, emphasizing similar elements, compares his prestige to that of Napoleon.³

African politicians, however, seem less eager to stand in succession to the Tokolor rulers. Senghor, writing while the Federation of Mali still existed, defined nationality as essentially "un commun vouloir de vie commune," transcending the narrower loyalties of *la patrie*.

¹ Thomas Hodgkin and Ruth Schachter, *French-Speaking West Africa in Transition* (New York, 1961), 380-381.

² T. Hodgkin, *African Political Parties* (London, 1961), 165.

³ J. Suret-Canale, *Afrique Noire* (Paris, 1958), 174-178.

So far as there is room for history in his concept, it is actually the history of the sixty years of colonial rule which has united men of different patries within the wider unity of *Afrique Occidentale Française* (AOF).⁴

Madeira Keita, in a well-known speech delivered within a similar frame of reference, seems positively to repudiate Al-Hajj 'Umar: "Naturally, a hundred years ago Islam was a pretext for a certain number of conquerors in Nigeria, or even in the Western Sudan, Senegal and Guinea, to carve themselves empires."⁵ He too seems to fear that the limited loyalties inspired by recent history might jeopardize hopes of achieving wider unity in the present—on the plane of pan-African politics or within Mali itself. Here he seems to echo the harsh judgments of other European writers such as Trimingham, who follows most historians of French colonial expansion in seeing Al-Hajj 'Umar as "a new type of Islamic adventurer whose conquests threw western Sudan into a state of complete anarchy."⁶ If the political leadership of modern Mali has indeed used localized historical experience to increase the sense of national unity and loyalty among these ethnically diverse subjects, it has found medieval Mali a more valuable patron, less potentially divisive, and more congenial to its own leaders than the Tokolor state.⁷

1

There are at least three major fields where research may produce a clearer view of the historical significance of the empire founded by Al-Hajj 'Umar, with its capital at Ségou. In the first place, there is a need to continue the study of the relationship between his campaigns and those *jihads* and reform movements by which, since 1725, Fula-speaking *ulama* had successfully established and ex-

⁴ L. S. Senghor, *Nation et Voie Africaine du Socialisme* (Paris, 1961), 113.

⁵ Madeira Keita, "The Single Party in Africa," *Présence Africaine*, XXX (1960), 35.

⁶ J. S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (Glasgow, 1962), 163.

⁷ See the interesting article by Jean Gallais, "Signification du Groupe Ethnique au Mali," *L'Homme*, II (1962), 106-129. For further evidence of African ambivalence towards Al-Hajj 'Umar, see Vincent Monteil, *L'Islam Noir* (Paris, 1964), 88-90.

panded theocratic states in Futa Jalon, Futa Toro, the empire of Sokoto, and Macina. There is even greater need for study of the institutions of the Tokolor empire—its administrative, fiscal, and military organization, its ruling personnel and their relationships with subject peoples. Until scholars have begun to work on the extensive documentary collection taken to Paris by Archinard, and to search for other sources which may exist within modern Mali, such general judgments as those cited above must remain tentative.⁸ Finally, there is considerable interest in the history of Tokolor relations with the French, with the interaction between African statecraft and French policies. The first two fields can be entered confidently only by scholars well versed in Arabic and in Islamic history, and this essay is primarily a survey of the third field. The subject has of course been studied before, most fully by Jacques Méniaud, formerly secretary-general of the huge colony Haut-Sénégal-Niger, in *Les Pionniers du Soudan*. This work, though presented in the form of a popular exercise in colonial hagiography, is solidly based on important correspondence of Archinard and others, and also uses the printed sources with some discrimination. But there still seems room for a review of French-Tokolor relations in the changed historical perspective of the 1960s, with the broader problem of the nature of the Tokolor state kept visible in the background.

The problem that underlies the ambivalence of modern African nationalists is essentially the same as that facing French policy-makers in the later nineteenth century. Were Al-Hajj 'Umar and

⁸ For a general survey of the whole field, see H. F. C. Smith, "The Islamic Revolutions of the 19th Century," *Journal*, Historical Society of Nigeria, II (1961), 169-185. Jamil Abun-Nasr summarizes an Oxford dissertation, emphasizing doctrinal aspects, in *Journal of African History* (JAH), II (1962), 329-331. T. Hodgkin raises political and institutional problems affecting all these movements in "Islam and National Movements in West Africa," JAH, II, 323-327, and "Islam, History and Politics," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, I (1963), 94-96. For additional notes on available sources, see G. Vadjá, "Contribution à la Connaissance de la Littérature Arabe en Afrique Occidentale," *Journal de la Société des Africanistes*, XX (1950), 229-237; E. F. Gautier, "Documents d'Archives Soudanais Concernant le Général Gallieni," *Géographie*, XIII (1924), 133-146; H. F. C. Smith, "Nineteenth Century Arabic Archives of West Africa," JAH, III, 333-336; B. G. Martin, "A Mahdist Document from Futa Jallon," *Bulletin de L'IFAN*, XXV, ser. B (1963).

his successor Amadu capable of welding the peoples of their empire into a real unity, or were they regarded by most of those peoples as alien oppressors? Tensions and conflicts clearly existed. Tokolors who had rallied to Al-Hajj 'Umar from his homeland of Futa Toro enjoyed power and privilege disproportionate to their numbers, many being installed as provincial governors; this was often resented by peoples accustomed to government by their own people. These same groups, and others, also resented and resisted attempts to enforce strict Moslem practice in such matters as prohibitions on alcohol and tobacco, the shaving of heads, and the limitation of wives to the canonical four. Finally, the Quadiri Fulas of the theocratic state of Macina resented not only the loss of their independence, but the imposition of what they considered the heretical practices of the Tijaniyya.

The amount of local resistance varied among different provinces of the empire, as Méniaud pointed out when describing the position in or about 1880.⁹ His account of the empire at that time distinguishes the areas within which the effectiveness of central control can usefully be studied. Control was then most secure in the immediate vicinity of Ségou, particularly on the right bank of the Niger, between Bamako and Sansanding. In more distant provinces, kinsmen of Amadu might exercise effective power over their subjects without acknowledging the authority of the capital to any great extent. In Macina, Méniaud regards Amadu's cousin Tidiani as having thrown off the suzerainty of Ségou (though Amadu was able to re-establish control when he took refuge there in 1891). In Dinguiraye, Amadu's half-brother Aguibou acknowledged the central authority in principle while pursuing independent policies internally and externally. Kaarta and the other northwestern provinces were, after 1873, rather more directly responsive to Amadu's will; but communications and control from the capital were liable to interruption in the Bambara district of Beledugu, wild country which, though never subject to the Bambara states of Ségou or Kaarta, became a center of resistance for the dynasties that 'Umar had ousted from those states. Finally, perhaps most uncertain in its allegiance, there was the upper basin of the Senegal and its tributaries, a politically fragmented area of mixed population, largely

⁹ Jacques Méniaud, *Les Pionniers du Soudan* (Paris, 1931), I, 127-134, 139.

Mandinka. Here the respect enjoyed by the chief Tokolor fortresses, Koundian and Mourgoula, seems to have varied considerably over the years. Since this was the country through which most Frenchmen traveled toward the Niger, temporary trends here might easily be generalized by observers in Saint-Louis and applied to the empire as a whole.

The testimony of Frenchmen who visited the Tokolor state often emphasizes its tensions and divisions. But it also provides evidence, not always consciously, of attempts to create a new type of African Moslem state—one that would transcend ethnic quarrels, draw through trade on the technology of the European world, and utilize the skills of Africans, whose experience or training might be relevant to this aim. Some officials at the time, like some scholars later, may have given prominence to evidence of the tensions at the expense of writing down these underlying tendencies.

2

There is ambiguity in the record of 'Umar's early attitude toward the French settlements on the Senegal. Prevailing opinion in Saint-Louis—as expressed, for example, in a book published in 1855 by a French official and a prominent Eurafican trader¹⁰—held that militant Islam represented a serious challenge to French civilization, to the Christian religion, and (since there was a streak of social egalitarianism in 'Umar's preaching that won him much support among artisans and small traders in the settlements) to the social order of the colony. Yet 'Umar's first communications with the colonial government suggest that he regarded his mission as primarily directed against "black Kaffirs" rather than French Christians. In 1847 he proposed a bargain to Governor Gramont: if France would supply arms and assist 'Umar to subdue Futa Toro, he in turn would guarantee order and allow Christians to trade on payment of duty.¹¹ These overtures he renewed to Governor Protet in 1854. Again the request for firearms was prominent, but the basis proposed for collaboration is worth noting: "The whites are only traders: let them bring merchandise in their ships, let them pay me

¹⁰ F. Carrère and P. Holle, *De la Sénégambie Française* (Paris, 1855).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 195.

a good tribute when I'm master of the Negroes, and I will live in peace with them. But I don't wish them to erect permanent establishments or send warships into the river."¹²

By 1855 it seems to have been commonly assumed among the Frenchmen of Saint-Louis that conflict with 'Umar was inevitable. Three new developments strengthened this conviction.¹³ In the first place, 'Umar's force seized some of the stocks held by Senegalese traders in the upper river. Secondly, he issued a manifesto addressed to the "men of Guet N'dar" (Saint-Louis) declaring that he had taken the goods of the Christians because they would not sell him arms and ammunition; now he would make war on Christians as well as unbelievers until they agreed to pay him tribute, and Saint-Louis Moslems should not join the Christians against him.¹⁴ Although this was alarming enough, his language does not seem to make a direct call to disobedience to the Moslem residents of Saint-Louis itself, but rather appeals to them not to assist the French in operations up-river. Moreover, the repeated reference to "tribute" is ambiguous. The word used (*djézia*) is that which describes the special tax owed to Moslem rulers by Christians and Jews; but the same term was used in the Senegal for customary payments and stipends made by the French to local rulers in return for cessions of land or protection of trade. There were obvious practical reasons why 'Umar should wish to obtain a regular income of this sort; if he represented it to his followers as religious tribute, so did other Moslem rulers in the Senegal.¹⁵

The third development, and the most complex, was the growth of enthusiastic support for 'Umar among peoples of the lower Senegal, in the area of French trade and French influence. Among the Tokolors of his homeland of Futa Toro, 'Umar was gaining support, though not among the chiefs;¹⁶ those who emigrated to

¹² L. L. C. Faidherbe, *Le Sénégal* (Paris, 1889), 140; cf. E. Mage, *Voyage dans le Soudan Occidental* (Paris, 1868), 240, 248.

¹³ There is a useful account of these events, from an anti-Moslem point of view, in the semiofficial French publication, *Annales Sénégalaises de 1854 à 1885* (Paris, 1885).

¹⁴ Translation in Carrère and Holle, *Sénégalie*, 204-207.

¹⁵ *Annales Sénégalaises*, vii.

¹⁶ A. Gouilly, *L'Islam dans l'Afrique Occidentale Française* (Paris, 1952), 75.

join his forces often urged him to turn his main energies toward the lower Senegal. To meet such a threat, the chiefs of Futa looked increasingly for French support. This interaction and the migration between Futa Toro and 'Umar's empire are subjects that would repay study. Farther up-river too, enthusiastic Moslems were inspired to make uncoordinated attacks on their neighbors. When the area of their commerce was thus troubled, the French looked for African allies. It seems that they did not always choose wisely. The new fort built by Faïdherbe at Medina became the refuge of chief Dyouka Sambala of Khasso, a warlike old man whose subjects had largely opted to follow 'Umar. When 'Umar attacked this fort in 1857, his primary aims were not to challenge French power directly, but to complete his control of Khasso, and perhaps to facilitate communications with Futa Toro.¹⁷ But after this siege was dramatically raised by Faïdherbe, 'Umar showed himself willing to negotiate on less imperious terms while he turned his armies eastward against the Bambaras of Ségou and the Fulas of Macina. Faïdherbe was the first governor he found willing to consider such a bargain seriously.

Although Faïdherbe is the dominant figure in French African policy of the nineteenth century, he still lacks an objective biographer. Hence the authority of his name has been invoked by successors to cover diverse and even contradictory policies. It is clear that Faïdherbe was impressed—probably overimpressed—by the economic and political prospects of the western Sudan and aimed to establish French influence in the upper and middle valley of the Niger. But for his methods he seems to have looked less to military conquest (as implied by admirers of later French expansion) than to negotiation backed by force; he saw some possibility of associating African states with his imperial purposes. Policymakers in contemporary Britain were often anxious to find African collaborators capable of guaranteeing security for the activities of European traders and missionaries without themselves incurring responsibility or expense. Witness the eagerness of Adderley, chairman of the Parliamentary

¹⁷ C. Monteil, *Les Khassonkés* (Paris, 1915), 38-44; L. Tauxier, *Histoire des Bambaras* (Paris, 1942), 152-153; also Mage, *Voyage*, 38, 247, 404-405; P. Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou* (Paris, 1887), 130-133, 340; Faïdherbe, *Sénégal*, 180ff; M. Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger* (Paris, 1912), II, 363-366.

Committee of 1865, to discover in West Africa "strong native governments" willing to take over the functions of the British settlements.¹⁸ Though less obvious in French policymaking, similar ideas can be found there; in Algeria there had been sincere though unsuccessful attempts to work with Abd-el-Kadr, and Napoleon III was to talk of creating an "Arab kingdom" there.¹⁹ Faïdherbe's Algerian service had not produced such prejudices as would preclude attempts to cast the Tokolor empire for a similar role in West Africa. In August 1860 he agreed with a Tokolor emissary on a truce and demarcation of spheres of influence along the line of the Bafing River, and provisionally agreed to send a French ambassador to discuss the possibilities of further collaboration with 'Umar himself.²⁰

But it was not until his second governorship, in 1863, that Faïdherbe despatched a young naval officer in colonial service, Eugène Mage (1837-1869) on a mission to 'Umar's new capital of Ségou. He was to seek Tokolor cooperation in Faïdherbe's plans to protect the caravan route between the head of navigation on the Senegal and Bamako on the Niger with a line of fortified posts, and to develop commercial navigation on the upper Niger. "This marabout" wrote the governor, "who in the past has stirred up so many difficulties for us, might in the future promote a transformation of great benefit to the Sudan and to ourselves, if he will only accept our point of view."²¹

Mage, accompanied by a French surgeon called Quintin, left Saint-Louis in October 1863 and reached Ségou in February 1864 by a circuitous northerly route. The timing of his mission was singularly unfortunate. Late in 1863 the Fulas of Macina, conquered only in the previous year, revolted against the Tokolors and were

¹⁸ J. D. Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (London, 1963), 64-78.

¹⁹ Quoted H. Deschamps, *Méthodes et doctrines coloniales de la France* (Paris, 1953), 112.

²⁰ *Annales Sénégalaises*, 443; Faïdherbe to Chasseloup-Laubat, 583 Aug. 28, 1860, Archives Nationales: Section Outre-Mer; Paris (ANSOM), Sénégal 1/46; Faïdherbe, *Sénégal*, 236-237.

²¹ Faïdherbe to Mage, Aug. 7, 1863, ANSOM, Sénégal III/9/c (printed in Mage, *Voyage*, 12-16).

joined by many Bambaras. When Mage arrived, 'Umar was absent on a military campaign, where later in 1864 he met a somewhat mysterious death. Ségou was full of conflicting rumors. Amadu, the slight, thoughtful son and heir-presumptive of 'Umar, detained the Frenchmen in or near the capital for more than two years. Only in February 1866 did he judge conditions stable enough to open negotiations with the French. Not surprisingly, the frustrations and vicissitudes which Mage suffered made him somewhat dubious about the advantages of cooperation with Amadu, whose authority at this stage was clearly precarious. He took back a treaty of seven clauses providing for peace and free circulation of trade, subject to a tax of 10 per cent on caravans entering the Tokolor state. But Faidherbe's successor Laprade, less well disposed toward cooperation with Moslem states, refused to agree to the proposed duty, and Mage was not inclined to fight very hard for his treaty.²² Nevertheless, he made it plain that the Tokolor empire was still a force to be reckoned with, quite capable of preventing the construction of Faidherbe's proposed line of forts. The book that he based on his journals provides the most informative French source for study of the organization of authority within this state.

There is no question that discontent was serious in several quarters. Besides the revolt of the Macina Fulas, 'Umar was facing persistent resistance from the Bambaras, around Ségou as well as in Beledugu.²³ But Mage also speaks of the "immense hatred" felt more widely for the *talibés*, the elite group of followers who provided military and administrative leadership within the empire. His implication, that this was symptomatic of general opposition to a

²² The treaty is printed in Mage, *Voyage*, 588-589. Copies of two reports by Mage at the close of his mission are in ANSOM, Sénégal, 111/9/c; a brief one of July 21, 1866, and a longer one without date. See also Yves Saint-Martin, "Les Relations diplomatique entre la France et l'empire Toucouleur de 1860 à 1884," *Bulletin de l'IFAN* Series B, XXVII (1965), 183-222, a study which appeared after this paper was written.

²³ Among the many references to Bambara discontent, see Mage, *Voyage*, 103, 162, 187, 272-282, and his undated report in ANSOM, Sénégal 111/9/c. The account in Delafosse, *Haut-Sénégal-Niger*, II, 321-331, draws heavily on Mage's testimony. See also C. Monteil, *Les Bambaras du Ségou et du Kaarta* (Paris, 1924), and Tauxier, *Histoire*, *passim*.

ruling Tokolor minority, has been followed by many subsequent writers.²⁴

Yet the random sample of information which Mage gives about the ethnic origins of those servants of the empire whom he happened to meet does not suggest that Tokolors monopolized positions of power in either army or local administration. At the provincial capital and fortress of Koundian, for example, though the military commander was a Tokolor ('Umar's kinsman, Racine Tall) the provincial chief was a Mandinka and he was surrounded by a great variety of peoples, including a former house servant from Saint-Louis.²⁵ Indeed, Saint-Louis men were conspicuous in many places. In 1855, Carrère and Holle had complained of the shortage of good carpenters and masons in Saint-Louis; freed from slavery in 1848, these men were now listening to marabouts who turned them away from European service.²⁶ Mage's repeated references to such people in centers of Tokolor power show where they went.²⁷ Mage's host in Ségou, Samba N'diaye, formerly a slave in Saint-Louis and trader on the river, had become chief engineer of the Tokolor army, where his skill in directing the building of substantial stone forts and in repairing and servicing two howitzers and gun carriages captured from the French in 1858 was a major factor in 'Umar's later victories.²⁸ Other prominent men—including the chief of Toumboula and a leading *griot* of Ségou—had lived in Sierra Leone.²⁹ Such men, having experience of European ideas and technology, seem to have been encouraged to come and apply their skills or knowledge to the modernization of this African state.³⁰ Traders also were en-

²⁴ Mage, *Voyage*, 422, 225, 456; cf. Méniaud, *Pionniers*, I, 131-133.

²⁵ Mage, *Voyage*, 75-82.

²⁶ Carrère and Holle, *Sénégal*, 12-15; cf. A. Villard, *Histoire du Sénégal* (Dakar, 1943), 128-129.

²⁷ Mage, *Voyage*, 78, 136-137, 241, 247, 295, 386.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 221-222, 247; cf. Soleillet, *Voyage*, 330; cf. Yves Saint-Martin, "L'Artillerie d'El Hadj Omar et d'Ahmadou," *Bulletin de l'IFAN* Series B, XXVII (1965), 506-572.

²⁹ Mage, *Voyage*, 155, 229, 307f.

³⁰ Compare Mage's references in *Voyage*, 265, to the way smiths accompanied the army and made 10,000 bullets a day during the fighting with Macina; and to the collection of taxes in saltpetre and charcoal, for the manufacture of local gunpowder; *ibid.*, 297-298. For a hint of other policies designed

couraged, whether Sarakules, Moroccans, or Gambia Akus; these influential people welcomed the extension of the empire, and still more the prospect of its reaching an agreement with the French.³¹ Despite the obvious obstacles to the unification of the diverse peoples of the region into a large Moslem state, Mage's evidence suggests that there were positive forces within the empire which favored the attempt.

For some years, however, the prospects of unity for the empire remained in the balance. Amadu had to deal not only with revolts of Bambaras and Fulas, but with the tendency of his kinsmen, charged with the government of outlying provinces, to act in an independent and even hostile manner. Only in 1874, when he had defeated his half-brothers Abibou and Moktar and assumed the prestigious title of "Commander of the Faithful," did Amadu's position seem reasonably assured. During these years trade with Senegal was still desirable, for it could provide Amadu with decisive fire power, and an occasional caravan did reach Medina.³² But with Kaarta's loyalty uncertain, this route could hardly be depended upon, and Amadu continued with some success to develop trade with the British in the Gambia and Sierra Leone.³³

For twelve years after Mage's return, the French were content to remain passive. They did not supply the mountain guns that Mage had promised Amadu or send him the Arabic text of the treaty that he expected.³⁴ Colonel Valière, appointed governor in 1869 with instructions to avoid further annexations,³⁵ soon went further, with the approval of local opinion in Senegal and of the ministry in Paris, and withdrew from the attempts at direct control which his predecessors had initiated in Futa Toro and certain other parts of the lower Senegal valley. Instead, Valière (whose policies have been

to improve the trade balance of the state, see the reference in F. Ricard, *Le Sénégal: Etude Intime* (Paris, 1865), 73 ff., to 'Umar's attempts to encourage the use of caps and other articles of African manufacture.

³¹ Mage, *Voyage*, 106, 120, 640, 662-663.

³² Valière to Minister of the Marine and Colonies (MMC), 187 May 15, 1871, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/56/b; 348 June 15, 1872; 205 April 14, 1873.

³³ Valière to MMC, 483 July 21, 1874, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/58/a; Brière to MMC, 463 June 5, 1878, Sénégal, 1/61/c; cf. Soleillet, *Voyage*, 96 ff.

³⁴ Mage, *Voyage*, 607-609; Soleillet, *Voyage*, 432-433.

³⁵ Rigault de Genouilly to Valière, Sept. 25, 1869, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/56/a.

little studied but frequently condemned) attempted to exercise influence through independent chiefs whose authority could command the support of their subjects. In particular, he restored Lat-Dior, whom Faïdherbe had deposed as *damel* of Cayor.³⁶ Such an attitude might logically have been extended to embrace collaboration with Amadu. But Valière, impressed by reports of dissension in the empire, and unable to decide whether Moslem states represented a menace or a constructive force,³⁷ was complacently content to have stabilized the position in the lower Senegal and to have restored the French colony to its former role of extended trading-station. In September 1874, Valière received friendly letters from Amadu, asking for cannon and the implementation of the treaty. He negotiated a new treaty with Tambo, the emissary, which reduced the duty payable to Amadu to a nominal level but which on the whole was designed to attract caravans to the Senegal rather than to encourage Senegalese traders to penetrate the Tokolor empire. Tambo was killed on his return journey to Ségou, and no new policy developed under Valière.³⁸

His successor in 1876, Colonel Brière de l'Isle, was a man of more active temperament. He feared that Valière's policies had strengthened Amadu's prestige by giving an impression of French weakness, and that renewed migration to his empire might dangerously depopulate the French sphere of influence on the left bank of the Senegal. Moreover, after coming into conflict with the British in the "Southern Rivers" of modern Guinea, Brière was also worried by signs that British influence might be extending from the Gambia valley toward Bondou and the upper Senegal.³⁹ In 1878, he secured authority for a show of force in support of France's one loyal dependent in the upper river, Dyouka Sambala of Khasso; as in 1855,

³⁶ Valière to MMC, 142 April 14, 1870, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/56/c; 306 July 15, 1870; 334 Aug. 14, 1870; 233 July 14, 1871.

³⁷ Valière to MMC, 233 July 14, 1871, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/56/b; 590 Oct. 14, 1872.

³⁸ Valière to MMC, 622 Sept. 24, 1874, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/58/a; 741 Nov. 22, 1874, Sénégal, 1/61/b. Valière's notes for Brière, May 20, 1876. The text of these proposals was shown to Gallieni at Nango in 1880. See Saint-Martin, "Les Relations," 192-196.

³⁹ Brière to MMC, 36 Jan. 23, 1878, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/61/c; 463 June 5, 1878.

France's relations with this turbulent old man involved action against the Tokolors. Niamodi, ruler of a district called Logo on the left bank of the Senegal, had disavowed Sambala's authority, and allowed the Tokolors to build a fort at Sabouciré; in September this was destroyed by a military expedition and Logo, with Natiaga, was temporarily reunited with Khasso.⁴⁰

Although this attack took place within the French sphere of 1860, it inevitably increased Amadu's suspicions of French intentions. Brière, though suspiciously disposed, had not decided to pursue a hostile policy toward the Tokolor empire. At the time of the attack on Sabouciré, J. S. Gallieni (1849-1916), a young officer of the marine infantry in the colony's directorate of political affairs, was proposing to renew negotiations on the basis of Mage's treaty.⁴¹ Earlier in the year Brière himself had financially supported the journey to Ségou of Paul Soleillet (1842-1885), a patriotic radical who had become a leading advocate of a trans-Saharan railway.⁴² His account of the journey to Ségou and his residence there from October 1878 until January 1879 (posthumously edited, embellished, and published by G. Gravier), contains a good deal of information (some based on direct observation, some learned from African informants) about the development of the Tokolor empire and its mode of government. The total impression is not drastically different from that given by Mage. Soleillet does not underrate Amadu's difficulties in getting his authority respected in his provinces, but recognizes the progress made since 1874.⁴³ Traders (including slavetraders) were moving freely through various parts of the empire; in the Monday market of Ségou there was local pottery, jewelry, metalwork, African cloth in twenty qualities and thirty designs, and a wide assortment of foods, besides European goods brought up from Senegal, Gambia, and Sierra Leone.⁴⁴ The rebel-

⁴⁰ Brière to MMC, 36 Jan. 23, 1878, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/61/c; 350 April 21, 1878. Brière to MMC, 645 Nov. 6, 1878, Sénégal, 1/63/a; 262 March 23, 1879. Badou to Brière, June 23, 1879, Sénégal III/10 bis/b.

⁴¹ P. Lyautey, *Gallieni* (Paris, 1959), 33-35.

⁴² Brière to MMC, 350 April 21, 1878, ANSOM, Sénégal, 1/61/c; cf. *Les Voyages et Découvertes de Paul Soleillet* (Paris, 1881), biographical note by P. Barnel; P. L. Monteil, *Souvenirs Vécus* (Paris, 1924), 15-16.

⁴³ P. Soleillet, *Voyage à Ségou* (Paris, 1887), 379.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 425-426.

lious Bambaras were always liable to interrupt trade; in 1879 they destroyed the market of Guigné, which had impressed Soleillet on his outward journey through Beledugu.⁴⁵ Soleillet, nevertheless, returned impressed by the economic possibilities which might be opened up in the Tokolor empire, if the formidable problems of transport could be solved.⁴⁶

Soleillet was equally impressed by signs of benevolence toward France. He had a warm greeting in Ségou, led by Samba N'diaye and by a former slave in Saint-Louis who called out, "Liberté! Mil huit cent quarante-huit! Merci!"⁴⁷ Amadu was cordial, at least until he heard the news of Sabouciré, anxious to renew relations with "mon ami Brière." His kinsman and chief minister, Seydou Djeylia (an able and learned man whom Mage had met as leader of the army of Nioro), discussed the possibility of a new treaty of trade and friendship and of receiving a resident French agent, though without precluding the establishment of similar relations with the British.⁴⁸ If the European powers could provide Amadu with sufficient power to bring his empire under effective control,⁴⁹ he would offer in return access to the wide and ordered market they dreamed of. In view of the apparent British danger, this prospect seemed not unattractive to Brière de l'Isle, who planned to send an official envoy to negotiate a new commercial treaty in 1879.⁵⁰

In 1879, a new factor was introduced when the French parliament approved the study of plans for a Senegal-Niger railway. Such a project would almost certainly require France to exercise a more direct influence in the Tokolor empire than Amadu would willingly concede. So it was to the Mandinkas that Brière and Gallieni now began to look for assistance in their new task. After the capture of Sabouciré, the French realized at last that Sambala was not popular in Logo and Natiaga; in September 1879 they evicted the Khassonkés and restored the former Mandinka rulers, who professed both their readiness to accept French protection and their dislike of

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 251ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, preface.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 393.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 378, 398, 437-439, 442-444; cf. Mage, *Voyage*, 323. Soleillet's spelling: Zeidou Zeila.

⁴⁹ Cf. Saint-Martin, "L'Artillerie," *passim*.

⁵⁰ Brière to MMC, 350 April 21, 1878, ANSOM, Sénégal, I/61/c.

the Tokolors.⁵¹ Chiefs of the area sent their children to Saint-Louis with requests for education *à la française*;⁵² they expressed willingness to use their influence with other Mandinka states to further French influence in the upper basin of the Senegal, not merely in the French sphere on the left bank of the Bafing but as far as Kita and even Bamako. Prospects opened of a Mandinka confederation under French patronage which would facilitate peaceful penetration of the very districts through which the railway was to run. That these districts included areas clearly recognized as part of Amadu's empire seemed a consideration of secondary importance.⁵³

With these ideas in mind, Gallieni set out in September 1879, not on the projected mission to Ségou but on a reconnaissance trip to the area of Bafoulabé. Mandinkas on both banks of the river, both above and below Bafoulabé, were in arms against the Tokolors and their Mandinka protégé Tiécoro, whose claim to the area of Bafoulabé itself they had recognized. Gallieni spoke of this as a "national movement." Professing strict political neutrality and behaving coldly to Tiécoro, he allowed the other Mandinkas to see his strong sympathy for their cause. He took with him to Saint-Louis representatives of the Mandinka and Bambara chiefly families from several districts; all were given favored treatment in Saint-Louis and those from Kita and Bamako remained to help Gallieni on his next expedition. But the clearest sign of hostility toward Amadu was the commencement, in November 1879, of the construction of a French fort at Bafoulabé. Although both Mandinka claimants had expressed willingness to welcome a French presence, this was situated on territory which the French had accepted since 1860 as lying within the Tokolor empire. They now found it convenient to regard Amadu's claim as "contestable."⁵⁴

⁵¹ Badou to Brière, June 23, 1879, ANSOM, Sénégal, III/10 bis.

⁵² Brière to MMC, 757 Oct. 8, 1879, ANSOM, Sénégal, I/63/a. Brière accepted the pupils, but pointed out that "nous ne voulions pas en faire des sujets français, parce que nous ne voulions pas faire de conquêtes. Notre but exclusif étant d'étendre notre commerce dans des pays libres, où nous ne voulions avoir que de bonnes routes et des postes pour les entretenir." The ministry commented, "bon langage."

⁵³ Brière to MMC, 526 July 8, 1879, ANSOM, Sénégal, I/63/a; 639 Aug. 7, 1879; memo, July 23, 1879.

⁵⁴ Gallieni to Brière, Nov. 17, 1879, ANSOM, Sénégal, III/10 bis; cf. Brière to MMC, 964 Dec. 7, 1879, Sénégal I/63/a; Monteil, *Souvenirs*, 22.

Thus, as I have described elsewhere,⁵⁵ there was ambiguity and even duplicity in Gallieni's purpose when, early in 1880, he set out with an armed party on the long-deferred mission to Amadu. There was a fundamental, and eventually fatal, uncertainty as to whether his primary aim was to associate the Tokolor empire with France's endeavor to forestall the British on the upper Niger or to temporize until the French army was prepared to advance into the Sudan as liberator of the Mandinkas, Bambaras, and other "subject peoples." Interwoven with this political ambiguity was a parallel uncertainty about the expedient attitude toward the Moslem religion, an uncertainty that persisted during the later formulation of French colonial policy and doctrine. Aware of Islam's potentialities both as a state-building force and as a possible focus of resistance to French power, Gallieni uneasily blended his disdain for the incoherence of the small animist states of the upper Senegal basin with certain intimations of their possible future as economic and political clients of French civilization. On these great questions the thought of this future pro-consul had not yet come to a synthesis (if indeed it ever did). Comparison of his published account of this mission with his reports preserved in the colonial archives show his judgment fluctuating from day to day. It also reveals a readiness to adjust not only his opinions but sometimes the text of documents, if his original reports showed French power in a less than glorious light.⁵⁶ In the words of Colonel Borgnis-Desbordes, "it is curious how the over-vivid imagination of this young officer drags him now to one side, now to the other."⁵⁷ On the whole, it is fair to say that the spirited soldiers who now governed the Senegal were growing less sympathetic to Faïdherbe's conceptions of collaboration with African states. As Seydou Djeylia had foreseen in his conversations with

⁵⁵ Hargreaves, *Prelude*, 256-265.

⁵⁶ For example, his original minute of his negotiations with Seydou Djeylia, Nov. 2, 1880, makes the latter say, "Nous aimons les Français mais nous n'avons pas confiance en eux. Eux au contraire ont confiance en nous, mais ne nous aiment pas." (Gallieni to Brière, 17 Nov. 14, 1880, ANSOM, Sénégal, III/10 bis). Cf. J. S. Gallieni, *Voyage au Soudan Français (Haut-Niger et Pays de Ségou)*, 1879-81 (Paris, 1885), 404: "Nous aimons les Français mais nous les craignons. Eux au contraire ne nous aiment pas, mais ne nous craignent pas non plus."

⁵⁷ Desbordes to Governor, April 1, 1881, ANSOM, Sénégal, IV/73 bis.

Soleillet, "military men, accustomed to giving orders, were temperamentally ill-adapted for peace negotiations."⁵⁸

But Gallieni's vacillations were not entirely arbitrary; they largely reflect variations in the apparent strength of Amadu's authority in different parts of his empire. Gallieni makes these distinctions in the concluding chapter of his book, published in 1885 at a time when he was less favorable to the idea of collaboration with Amadu than he had been at certain stages of his journey. On the right bank of the Niger, Gallieni admitted in his book, Amadu's authority was established over a population of 100,000, with an army of up to 12,000 men. His reports from Nango emphasized still more strongly Amadu's power and influence in this area.⁵⁹ In the words of one of his companions, as soon as the Frenchmen crossed the river, "this semblance of social organization, in contrast to the disordered barbarism through which they had just passed, inspired in them a certain confidence in the good faith of their hosts, even leading them to hope to establish serious and durable relations with them on behalf of our country."⁶⁰

Elsewhere the position was different. Gallieni reproduces the usual doubts about Amadu's control of the outlying provinces; but it was above all on the basis of his experience in the districts through which he had traveled on his way to the Niger that Gallieni (like Colonel Desbordes later⁶¹) concluded that Amadu was faced with something like a national revolt of Mandinkas and Bambaras, which France should support. The change in his opinions after crossing the Niger is all the more impressive.

Certainly there were weaknesses in the Tokolor state. Yet Gallieni's account of his negotiations suggests that Amadu and Seydou Djeylia had clear ideas of how an agreement with France might help to remedy them. As had long been clear,⁶² Amadu's primary

⁵⁸ Soleillet, *Voyage*, 442-444.

⁵⁹ For instance, Gallieni to Brière, 5 July 7, 1881, ANSOM, Sénégal, III/10 bis; cf. Gallieni, *Voyage*, 606-610.

⁶⁰ Captain Pietri, *Les Français au Niger* (Paris, 1885), 208.

⁶¹ See his long report, July 1, 1881, ANSOM, Sénégal, IV/73 bis.

⁶² Cf. memo of July 23, 1879, probably drafted by Gallieni: "Il s'applique à entretenir de bonnes relations avec le gouvernement du Sénégal et voudrait même se créer par cette amitié des moyens de guerre qui resteraient sans importance pour nous mais qui seraient certainement de nature à lui créer une

aim was to secure artillery and other arms with which to consolidate and extend his power eastward to Timbuktu, southward to the supposed "mountains of Kong"; in return, he offered France the benefits of access to an expanding market, though preferably not the exclusive access which Gallieni demanded. The basic condition of such a bargain would be respect for Tokolor independence. Seydou Djeylia made it very clear that Amadu would not willingly admit French power as distinct from French influence, especially in view of the recent policies at Sabouciré and Bafoulabé. Any French resident should be an African Moslem; there was to be no railway, and no steamboats were to be involved in the projected navigation of the Niger; most important of all, the French were to withdraw from Bafoulabé and to build no more forts on Amadu's territory. The French text of the treaty that was signed speaks of the Niger's being placed under French protection, but the Arabic text does not. To attribute this discrepancy to African "bad faith" is to ignore the whole drift of Seydou's contentions, as recorded by Gallieni himself.⁶³

By 1880, the trend of French policy seemed to be toward a more direct exercise of power. While Gallieni was still at Nango, Desbordes began to advance to the Niger with four hundred well-armed combatant troops; when he returned to Saint-Louis it was decided not to ratify his treaty, even in its French version. Amadu regarded the agreement as in force; but the French column advanced through his territory to Bamako, and the promised firearms never reached him. Yet, after all, the conflict was postponed. From 1882 on, the French found their attention increasingly diverted toward another Moslem ruler who threatened to impede their advance: Samori. Fortunately for the speed of the French advance, Amadu and Samori never found a basis for working together. Still, the rise of a powerful state under Mandinka leadership may have had some-

supériorité militaire considérable vis-à-vis des ennemis indigènes; avec les canons faisant plus de bruit que de mal, il subjugueraient facilement tous les peuples sur lesquels portent ses visées. C'est pour cela qu'il demande sans cesse des canons et un instructeur pour apprendre à ses gens à s'en servir." ANSOM, Sénégal, I/63/a.

⁶³ These texts are printed, in part, in Méniaud, *Pionniers*, I, 336-40. Cf. minutes of negotiations, ANSOM, Sénégal, III/10 bis, and the somewhat different text in Gallieni, *Voyage*, 398-407.

thing to do with the increasing unrest which the French encountered among the Mandinkas they had hoped to "liberate" in the upper Senegal basin.

There was a temporary stalemate. In 1884, Amadu moved his headquarters from Ségou to Nioro (where Desbordes had now driven the Tokolor colony of Mourgoula), thus escaping from the immediate range of French operations. The French military, reciprocating Amadu's distrust, did not yet feel strong enough for a direct attack on the Tokolors.⁶⁴ Some of their forces were already committed against other Moslem warriors; their lines of communication were endangered by Lat-Dior in Cayor (1882-1886), and by Mamadu Lamina in Galam (1885-1887). The technical and financial difficulties of railway construction were becoming dishearteningly apparent; political opposition to colonial adventures was sharpened by a French set-back in Indo-China in March 1885. All these reasons made the prospect of conflict with Amadu less easily acceptable.

So, for reasons of expediency rather than principle, the idea of collaboration with Amadu recovered respectability for a few more years. Lieutenant-Colonel Frey, who commanded French troops in the Sudan in 1885-1886, regretted the "fever of colonization" that demanded military operations in this unrewarding territory. Disillusioned by public attacks on his methods, he proposed a return to the true Faidherbian policy, as he interpreted it, of helping Amadu to bring order to his empire and looking to him for guarantees for the future of French trade.⁶⁵ Gallieni, when he succeeded Frey, revived the idea of collaboration with Amadu by re-opening the supply of firearms and concluding a revised protectorate treaty in 1887.⁶⁶ But these treaties proved little more than temporary expedients, which secured Gallieni's flank while he concentrated on

⁶⁴ Méniaud, *Pionniers*, I, 164-166, 177-178, 184-186, 194-198. There is a good study of military attitudes in A. S. Kanya-Forstner, "The Role of the Military in the Formulation of French Policy towards the Western Sudan, 1879-1899" (unpubl. diss., University of Cambridge, 1965).

⁶⁵ H. Frey, *Campagne dans le Haut Sénégal* (Paris, 1888), part 3; Méniaud, *Pionniers*, I, 343-346.

⁶⁶ J. S. Gallieni, *Deux Campagnes au Soudan Français* (Paris, 1891), 34, 618-621; cf. 46, 196, 429. For his correspondence with Amadu, see Lyautey, *Gallieni*, 70-74.

defeating Mamadu Lamina and extending French influence southward towards Futa Jalon. French military opinion increasingly regarded Moslem states as inevitable enemies; in 1889 Gallieni's more bellicose successor Archinard embarked on a new drive to destroy the Tokolor empire. But it proved harder than anticipated to construct an alternative political system out of the "oppressed nationalities." The Diara dynasty of the Bambaras, restored at Ségou, had hoped that Amadu's fall would restore their former independence; their plot to get rid of the French was detected and violently suppressed. Subsequent attempts to impose more pliable rulers from the Massassi clan met fierce opposition from France's supposed "natural allies" among the Bambaras.⁶⁷

3

In this essay I have not sought to idealize the Tokolor state or to deny the difficulties of creating a united Moslem state out of the diverse peoples of the nineteenth-century Sudan. But the testimony of the French observers studied here does not confirm the judgment of those who have described the Tokolor state with words like "anarchy." Instead, it provides many clues to the existence of a political order that deserves a more thorough investigation, based upon its own surviving records.⁶⁸

Certainly, the Tokolor state was sufficiently well organized to convince Frenchmen of many varied backgrounds that there were real possibilities of advancing French influence and interests in some sort of association with Amadu or al-Hajj 'Umar. Policies of this sort are commonly held to be characteristic of British rather than French imperialism. Yet, in practice, colonial policies are always shaped under the pressures of circumstances. Such circumstances have decisively affected the more philosophical debates between Frenchmen who favored supporting Islam and those who regarded it as an enemy—between the advocates of "association" and those of "assimilation." In this context Gallieni's vacillating approach may represent merely a healthy empiricism carried to

⁶⁷ Tauxier, *Histoire*, 184-185. On Archinard's campaigns and policies, Méniaud provides a wealth of documentation.

⁶⁸ It is being studied by Mr. Olatunji Oloruntimehin of the University of Ibadan.

excess by an enthusiastic but immature practitioner. And possibly these early experiences with the complexity of African politics may have helped to produce that administrative "eclecticism" which he practiced during his later career in Madagascar, and for which he has frequently been praised.⁶⁹

These reflections suggest a fascinating though speculative conclusion. It was not preconceived doctrine which led the French to destroy the Tokolor state; witness their later attempt to rule Macina through Aguibou. No doubt the conditions under which they launched the conquest of the western Sudan were not favorable for policies involving the maintenance of established Moslem empires. But it is not absolutely unreasonable to envisage Amadu's state surviving into the period of French rule and serving, like the Nigerian emirates, as defenders of African practices and institutions against European influence. Conceivably, it might be an appreciation of this averted possibility that accounts for the cool reverence of his successors in modern Mali.

⁶⁹ Cf. P. Gourou, "Gallieni," in C. A. Julien, *Les Techniciens de la Colonisation* (Paris, 1947), 104-105; H. Deschamps, *Gallieni Pacificateur* (Paris, 1929), 25.

VI

Pan-Negro Nationalism in the New World, before 1862

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PAN-AFRICANISM AND PAN-NEGRO nationalism are historically related phenomena with similar origins.¹ Both grew out of resentment at the treatment of black-skinned peoples, whether as slaves in the West Indies and in the American South, as "free persons of color," or, later, as subjects of new European empires in Africa. Pan-Africanism as an organized movement, concerned with the grievances of all black-skinned peoples, and particularly involving an attack on colonialism in Africa, is a twentieth-century phenomenon: the term came into use in 1900 when Henry Sylvester Williams, a West Indian barrister from Trinidad, organized a Pan-African conference in London, attended by delegates from the West Indies and the United States.²

Five other conferences were held, largely through the efforts of the American Negro scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois, at which delegates met to articulate their grievances and to devise means of removing them.³ These delegates were almost entirely from the New World; indeed, it was only at the last of the extra-African conferences—at Manchester in 1945—that Africans were adequately represented.⁴ No meetings had been held on African soil, though African issues

¹ This article on Pan-Africanism and pan-Negro nationalism is based on a paper given at the University of Massachusetts on December 13, 1962. I am grateful to Professor Gwendolen Carter for her assistance. Research was made possible by a travel grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London, and by the British Commonwealth Scholarship Commission; to both of these bodies I am grateful.

² *The Times*, July 24, 25, 26, 1900; also the account by an American delegate, Bishop Alexander Walters, *My Life and Work* (New York, 1917), xx.

³ See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The World and Africa* (New York, 1947), 7-12, 236-242; George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* (London, 1956), 137-151; American Society of African Culture, ed., *Pan-Africanism Reconsidered* (Los Angeles, 1962), 37-52; and Vernon McKay, *Africa in World Politics* (New York, 1963), 93-108.

⁴ For a list of the delegates of the 1945 Pan-African conference, see George Padmore, ed., *History of the Pan-African Congress* (Manchester, n.d.), 71-73.

were discussed at every conference. After Ghana gained its independence in 1957, the Pan-African movement began to take on a more African character, largely because it had the support of the first of the new African states created after World War II. Though New World Negroes had played, and continued to play, a part on the African continent, the movement passed finally into the hands of African leaders.⁵

This specifically named and organized Pan-Africanism was not the first Negro movement with "African" and "all-African" aspirations. There were at least two earlier such manifestations of thought and feeling, the most recent—Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement in the nineteen-twenties—being the best known.⁶ But early in the nineteenth century there developed among Negroes in the West Indies and in the United States a movement preoccupied with the promotion of emigration and the creation of new states, most of them in Africa. As in the case of Garvey's movement, these early pan-Negro nationalists were concerned with the plight of Negroes in the New World. They failed, however, to produce a charismatic leader or a mass movement. Nevertheless, in their statements and actions these pan-Negro leaders anticipated many of their twentieth-century successors,⁷ particularly in their interest in Africa, their belief in a great African past, and their dilemma of choice between reform of the New World and "regeneration" of their ancestral home.

1

Haiti had a chance to be the first state to provide a base for a pan-Negro program. The slaves of Haiti revolted in 1804 and gained their independence from the greatest military power in Europe, to become the second modern sovereign state in the Americas. The rulers of the Negro "empire" were aware of a responsibility to the Negro race when they invited Negroes to cooperate in building a

⁵ For Pan-Africanism since 1958, see Colin Legum, *Pan-Africanism* (London, 1962); also McKay, *Africa*, 109-133.

⁶ See Edmund David Cronon, *Black Moses* (Madison, 1955).

⁷ See George Shepperson, "Notes on American Negro Influences on the Emergence of African Nationalism," *Journal of African History*, 1.2:299-312 (1960); Nnamdi Azikiwe, "The Future of Pan-Africanism," *Présence africaine*, 12:11 (1962).

model state as the final, convincing answer to assertions of Negro inferiority.⁸ However, because of internal division, Haiti failed to fulfil its promise.⁹ Even so, its continued existence remained for many Negroes proof of Negro ability, and a source of hope for a better future for the race.

Of course, many New World and British Negroes had maintained a sentimental attachment to, and interest in, Africa. It is noteworthy that practically all Negro organizations formed in the United States up to about the third decade of the nineteenth century had the word "African" in their titles.¹⁰ And among the Negroes in Britain, set free by Lord Mansfield's judicial decision in 1772, there were a few who advocated what was essentially the point of view of British evangelicals and humanitarians, namely, that Britain should exert itself to stop the slave trade, replace it by legitimate commerce, and help to christianize and civilize Africa.¹¹ These Negroes of Britain also played a part in inducing British humanitarian groups to found the colony of Sierra Leone in 1787. The Negroes themselves formed the great majority of the emigrants who embarked from Britain.¹² Less than two years after the first emigrants landed, the Free African Society of Newport, Rhode Island, showed an interest in the colony and in 1795 sent out a delegate to prospect.¹³ Sierra Leone also attracted Negroes from Nova Scotia, where they had been settled after fighting on the side of the British in the American revolution.

⁸ James Redpath, ed., *A Guide to Hayti* (Boston, 1861), see preface and 104.

⁹ See James G. Leyburn, *The Haitian People* (New Haven, 1941), *passim*.

¹⁰ Some examples are: Prince Hall's African Lodge No. 1, the Free African Societies of Philadelphia and Newport, the African Institutions of New York and Philadelphia, various independent African Baptist churches, and the African Methodist Church. From about the third decade on, when American Negroes became convinced that the American Colonization Society (founded in 1817) wished forcibly to deport them to Africa, the title "African" became less popular among them and was replaced by "Colored."

¹¹ See Ignatius Sancho, *Letters* (London, 1782); Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery* (London, 1787); and Gustavus Vassa, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London, 1789).

¹² R. R. Kuczynski, *Demographic Survey of the British Colonial Empire* (London, 1948), 40-43; also Christopher Fyfe, *History of Sierra Leone* (London, 1962), 13-19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 112.

Anxious to leave behind an uncongenial climate and society, 1,131 of them—led by Thomas Peters, a millwright, who had negotiated with the directors of the Sierre Leone Company, and David George, a zealous Baptist preacher—emigrated to the “Colony of Freedom” in 1792. Both Peters and George can be regarded as prototypes of those Negro leaders who sought to lead Negroes out of “bondage” and back to the “fatherland” in Africa.

Moreover, the arrival of the Nova Scotians saved the colony from complete dissolution. Further reinforcements came in 1800 in the form of 532 Maroons who had taken part in a revolt in Jamaica, had been transported to Nova Scotia, and had then elected to emigrate to Sierra Leone. In 1807, the British government outlawed the slave trade and on January 1, 1808, assumed from the Sierra Leone Company direct control of the colony, which was to be used as a center for the suppression of the slave trade in West Africa as well as for settling and civilizing liberated Africans. In 1804, the Church Missionary Society began work in the colony, and Sierra Leone became the center of British humanitarian activities in West Africa. By 1808, Sierra Leone had a population of nearly two thousand westernized Negroes and had become an obvious focus for further Negro emigration to Africa. Sierra Leone might do what Haiti was failing to do.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, there were already signs that the freed American Negro might have to seek a home outside the United States. Those years marked a sharp decline in his fortune. The invention and use of the cotton gin in the last years of the eighteenth century, and the subsequent remarkable spread of the cotton kingdom to the south and southwest, had served to revive the waning institution of slavery. Manumission of slaves, which had been frequent in the years following the American revolution, had come to a virtual end in the South by the turn of the century. The relatively large free Negro population that had grown up was regarded by many white Southerners as an anomaly and a threat to its society.¹⁴ In the North, Negroes fared no better: although by

¹⁴ In 1800, there were 108,435 free Negroes in the United States. By 1830, this had risen, mainly by natural increase, to 319,599, and to 488,070 by 1860. The free Negro population remained at roughly one tenth of the entire Negro population. See *Negro Population of the United States*, Bureau of Census (Washington, 1918), 57.

1804, all slavery there had been abolished, Negroes were not accepted as an integral part of American society.¹⁵ And as the Southern states began taking measures intended to return free Negroes to slavery or to drive them out, the North, fearful of an influx, seemed to vie with the South in making their lives difficult.

Despite the growing discrimination against them, however, many American Negroes continued to assert their rights as American citizens. Many, for instance, began to look upon the efforts of the American Colonization Society,¹⁶ founded in 1817 as a barely disguised attempt on the part of slaveholders, who were prominently associated with the organization, to rid the United States of a potentially troublesome element and thus make secure the Southern system of slavery.¹⁷ From 1830 on, Negroes met in national conventions to denounce slaveholders and the American Colonization Society, and to declare their determination to fight for their civil rights.¹⁸

2

While many Negroes in the United States sought to achieve complete integration within American society, others became pan-Negro nationalists. Despairing of becoming first-class citizens in their own country, they became advocates of Negro emigration to Africa and elsewhere, and held visions of new states on a continent regenerated by their efforts. Prominent among them were Paul Cuffee, Daniel Coker, Lott Cary, and John Russwurm.¹⁹ All but Cuffee died in the newly established Negro settlements in West Africa.

¹⁵ For an elaboration of this thesis, see Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1862* (Chicago, 1962).

¹⁶ For the history of the society, see Earle Lee Fox, *The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840* (Baltimore, 1919); and P. J. Stadenraus, *The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865* (New York, 1961).

¹⁷ See Louis B. Mehlinger, "The Attitude of the Free Negro Toward Colonization," *Journal of Negro History*, I (July 1916).

¹⁸ See John W. Cromwell, "The Early Negro Convention Movement," *Occasional Papers* [of the American Negro Academy], IX (Washington, 1940); August Meier, "The Emergence of Negro Nationalism," *Midwest Journal*, IV (Winter 1951-52), 96-104; and Howard H. Bell, "A Survey of the Negro Convention Movement, 1830-1861" (unpublished dissertation, Northwestern University, 1953).

¹⁹ This is not, of course, meant to be an exhaustive list: these were chosen

Cuffee was a devout Quaker from Massachusetts, a prosperous trader and shipowner who, as a young man, had fought for the rights of Negroes in his native state.²⁰ When this met with little success, he turned to Africa, and particularly to Sierra Leone, to work for the "improvement and civilization of the blacks" of Africa, to provide selective emigration to Sierra Leone, and to seek the suppression of the slave trade and its replacement by legitimate commerce. His trader's mind was excited by the possibility of extensive commerce between Negro America and West Africa, to raise the wealth and prestige of the race. In 1808, he obtained the support of the African Institution, a British humanitarian organization comprised mainly of former directors of the Sierra Leone Company and still influential in directing the affairs of the colony. Three years later he visited Sierra Leone, where he showed considerable care in making plans for emigration. Finally, he founded the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone "to open a channel of intercourse" between Negro America and Sierra Leone; as an earnest of his good faith, he bought a house in Freetown.²¹

Long interested in Negro education in America, Cuffee also showed interest in promoting education in Sierra Leone: "Africa calls for men of character to fill stations in the Legislature," he wrote.²² On his return to America, he sought personally to persuade Negroes in such centers as Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and his own town of Westport to support colonization in Africa. In 1815 Cuffee made his second trip to Sierra Leone, taking, largely at his own expense, thirty-eight Negroes in family groups. In letters to America these emigrants urged other Negroes to follow their example.²³ When Cuffee returned, he made his experience available to the founders of the American Colonization Society. Indeed, he was chosen to lead emigrants to be sent out by the society, but he

because they were articulate or outstanding men of action. For a discussion of American Negro procolonization views in this period, see Mehlinger, "Attitude." For an example of a project for colonization outside Africa, see the discussion of Delany and Holly below.

²⁰ For Cuffee's biography, see Henry Noble Sherwood, "Paul Cuffee," *Journal of Negro History*, VIII (April 1923), 153-229.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 176.

²² *Ibid.*, 206.

²³ *Ibid.*, 218.

died before the first expedition left for West Africa. However, shortly before this he expressed the widespread feeling Negroes shared against the society by cautioning against too eager an acceptance of its scheme.²⁴

Despite Cuffee's warning, the society won the support of his friend Daniel Coker. A runaway slave who as a boy had acquired a rudimentary education, Coker had become schoolmaster and religious leader in the free Negro community of Baltimore. As a young man, he had angrily denounced the institution of slavery and asserted that, despite its handicap, "the African Race . . . had given proof of talents."²⁵ Coker had played a leading role in the break with the Methodist Episcopal Church, which resulted in the formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.²⁶ Elected its first bishop, he had declined the honor. Intent on emigrating to West Africa, he was among the first eighty-eight emigrants sent out by the Colonization Society. Although the expedition was led by three white officials, it seems that in the eyes of the emigrants Coker was the leader.²⁷ His journal shows him as keenly conscious of the possibilities of the enterprise and of some responsibility for its success. In the two years of hardship and uncertainty that followed before the emigrants finally settled at Cape Mesurado—the first beginnings of Liberia—the leadership devolved mainly on him. He later settled in Sierra Leone.

Lott Cary, who was among the second group of emigrants, played a versatile role as clergyman, doctor, militiaman, builder, and pioneer in agriculture.²⁸ He regarded himself as primarily a missionary to the native Africans, and from the start he was concerned that the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 213-221; also Henry N. Sherwood, "Paul Cuffee and his Contribution to the American Colonization Society," *Proceedings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, VI (1913), 370-402.

²⁵ *A Dialogue Between A Virginian and an African Minister, Written by Daniel Coker, a Descendant of Africa, Minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore* (Baltimore, 1810), 10.

²⁶ Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, 1891), 89.

²⁷ *The Journal of Daniel Coker, A Descendant of Africa . . . in the Ship Elizabeth, on a Voyage for Sherbro in Africa . . .* (Baltimore, 1820), 15-16.

²⁸ Harry Johnston, *Liberia* (London, 1906), I, 135; R. R. Gurley, *Life of Jehudi Ashmun* (Washington, 1835), 147-160; Alexander, *History*, 241-254.

colonists should have friendly relations with the tribes and so exert a civilizing influence. He was born a slave, and, though ignorant at twenty-seven, he acquired considerable learning and became a well-to-do Baptist preacher in Richmond, Virginia, by the age of thirty-three. Yet he gave up this relatively comfortable position to go to Liberia. He wrote: "I am an African; and in this country, however meritorious my conduct and respectable my character, I cannot receive the credit due to either. I wish to go to a country where I shall be estimated by my merits not by my complexion, and I feel bound to labour for my suffering race."²⁹ Cary died, in an accident, on November 10, 1828.

John B. Russwurm was born in Jamaica, and became one of the first two Negro graduates from an American college.³⁰ In March 1827, he founded and became the editor of the first American Negro newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*. He abandoned his opposition to the American Colonization Society, and in 1829 announced his conversion to the view that the free Negro could help himself and his race best by giving strong support to Liberia.³¹ He soon left for Liberia and in 1830 founded the *Liberia Herald*. He also held the positions of superintendent of education and colonial secretary; from 1836 until his death in 1851, he was governor of Maryland, a colony adjacent to Liberia to the south, which was founded by the Maryland Colonization Society in 1834.³² As the first Negro governor in West Africa, Russwurm felt that the conduct of his office was a test of the ability of the Negro: he seems to have ruled, with substantial justice to colonists, Africans, and missionaries alike.³³

These four leaders in the early phase of the Pan-African movement had much in common. All were men of substance, in nearly every case through their own talent and industry. All of them, including Russwurm the Jamaican, were protesting against discrimination in the United States. Indeed, Coker had taken part in the setting

²⁹ Quoted in *ibid.*, 243.

³⁰ See William M. Brewer, "John B. Russwurm," *Journal of Negro History*, XIII (Oct. 1928), 413-422.

³¹ See his editorials in *Freedom's Journal*, II (Feb. 14, 1829 *et seq.*).

³² For a history of the founding of the colony, see *Journal of the Maryland Historical Society*, V (Feb. 1850), 129-152.

³³ Russwurm's letters and reports as governor, not used in Brewer's "Russwurm," are in the archives of the Maryland Historical Society.

up of an "African" church, an early example of the use of historical origins as the basis of a protest. Although Russwurm and Cuffee showed an understandable suspicion of the white-dominated American Colonization Society, they gave Liberia their support, perhaps on the good practical ground that, whatever the motive of the society's leaders and supporters, the society was creating a Negro state in Africa.

Between 1830 and about 1850, there seems to have been something of a falling off of activity among American Negroes. No new and effective leader appeared to take up the pan-Negro cause, although there is evidence that sentiment in favor of emigration continued to grow.³⁴ In the West Indies, particularly in Jamaica and Barbados, there was widespread interest both in leaving the place of former bondage and continued discrimination and in taking Christianity to "benighted brothers" in Africa.³⁵ In Barbados, in the three decades after the abolition of slavery, at least three organizations were formed for promoting emigration to Liberia: the Barbados Colonization Society, the Fatherland Union Society, and the Barbados Company for Liberia.³⁶ But because of the lack of adequate financial resources among Negroes or external aid, the opposition of the still powerful West Indian sugar planters, and perhaps the absence of any oppressive discrimination, little emigration was organized.³⁷

It is, however, interesting that groups in the West Indies should have looked to Liberia. After the emancipation of the slaves, there was less pressure on them in the form of discrimination than on the

³⁴ Carter G. Woodson, *The Mind of the Negro as Reflected in Letters Written during the Crisis, 1800-1860* (Washington, 1926), *passim*.

³⁵ See A. E. Payne, *Freedom in Jamaica* (London, 1946), 73-74; C. P. Groves, *Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London, 1954), II, 54; *A General Account of the West Indian Church Association for the Furtherance of the Gospel in West Africa* (London, 1855), 5-7.

³⁶ *Maryland Colonization Journal*, IV (1848), 213; also American Colonization Society, *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (Washington, 1866), 7.

³⁷ There is one exception to this. In 1865, 365 Negroes from Barbados emigrated to Liberia in an expedition sponsored by the Liberian government but financed mainly by the American Colonization Society. See American Colonization Society, *Fifty-Second Annual Report* (Washington, 1869), 53; and chap. 3 my book on Blyden cited below.

American Negro to seek a home elsewhere. It is significant that the three important West Indian advocates of pan-Negro nationalism discussed here—Russwurm, Edward W. Blyden,³⁸ and Robert Campell³⁹—had all experienced and resented the discrimination against Negroes in the United States.

The desire of West Indian Negroes who wanted to emigrate for other reasons had important consequences for West Africa. It was these people who urged the start of missionary work in West Africa by both the British Baptist and the United Scottish Presbyterian societies. West Indians played an important role in their work, as well as in that of the Basel and Wesleyan missions. They accounted also for the formation of the West Indian Church Association, whose missionaries worked in the Rio Pongo area in West Africa. The association was an autonomous body which, unlike the other missionary societies, derived its support in money and men mainly from West Indian Negroes.⁴⁰ The West Indian missionaries and teachers worked, so they felt, for the regeneration of Africa and on behalf of the Negro race.⁴¹ Men like Joseph Fuller, Henry Wharton, and John Duport respectively spent forty, twenty-eight, and eighteen years in Africa.⁴²

In the eighteen-fifties, however, there was a rapid revival of interest among American Negroes, as the conflict over slavery became more intense. Negroes were, of course, deeply involved and, as

³⁸ See discussion of Blyden below; also Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward W. Blyden (1832-1912)*, *Pan-Negro Patriot* (London, 1966).

³⁹ See discussion of Campell below; also Robert Campell, *A Pilgrimage to My Motherland* (New York, 1861), 11.

⁴⁰ A. Barrow, *Fifty Years in Western Africa: Being a Record of the West Indian Church on the Banks of the Rio Pongo* (London, 1900), *passim*.

⁴¹ In addition, many West Indian artisans and professionals were attracted to West Africa, particularly to Sierra Leone, but primarily because of the better economic opportunities there. See Abioseh Nicol, "West Indians in West Africa," *Sierra Leone Studies*, N.S., no. 13 (June 1960), 14-23. Also from about 1840, Brazilian and Cuban Negroes trickled back to Lagos and its hinterland where, as artisans, agriculturists, and traders, they formed an important section of the community.

⁴² For biographical details on these three missionaries, see Robert Glennie, *Joseph Jackson Fuller* (London, 1925); G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Society* (London, 1922), 164; and Barrow, *Fifty Years*, *passim*.

events appeared to be set on a course against them, more wanted to emigrate. In 1850, the Fugitive Slave Bill was passed, giving federal commissioners virtually unlimited power for the apprehension and return of alleged fugitives. This was only the first shock in a decade of "sorrowful and unmixed gloom."⁴³ There followed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision, the failure of John Brown's raid, and an apparent blow from the Republican Party when Abraham Lincoln, a compromise candidate, assumed the presidency. It would be useful to study the period between 1850 and 1862 in detail because not until Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement of the 1920s did pan-Negro nationalism seem again to possess real vigor.

The independence of Liberia in 1847 could hardly have come at a more opportune time for the cause of emigration from the New World. Congratulations to the new republic came from all major Negro groups, and many hoped with John B. Hepburn of Port-au-Prince that Liberia's course was now "onward to empire and to fame."⁴⁴ In 1848, the American Colonization Society sent out delegates to report on Liberia's possibilities as a future home.⁴⁵ West Indian Negroes, too, showed interest: the Barbados Colonization Society "for assisting in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and the introduction of civilization into Africa" received the news of Liberia's independence with "inexpressible joy" and regarded it "as another demonstration to the world, that the descendants of Africa, when placed in a fair position, are not inferior in civilization, religion, and morality, to those nations amongst whom it was their lot to be cast for a given time."⁴⁶ The new interest in Liberia reflected itself in a substantial increase in the annual number of American emigrants, which rose from 51 in 1847 to 441 in 1848. This increase in emigration was maintained throughout the next decade.⁴⁷

⁴³ The phrase is that of the American Negro leader, James McCune Smith. See his introduction to a *Memorial Discourse by Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Delivered in the Hall of the House of Representatives . . .* (Washington, 1865), 56.

⁴⁴ *Maryland Colonization Journal*, IV (1848), 213.

⁴⁵ The American Colonization Society, *Thirty-Second Annual Report* (Washington, 1849), 8.

⁴⁶ *African Repository*, XXIV (Aug. 1848), 24.

⁴⁷ American Colonization Society, *Fifty-Second Annual Report* (Washington, 1869), 53.

The new Liberian republic, of which so much was hoped, had a disappointing beginning. In 1850, three years after independence, it was a country of roughly 13,000 square miles, with a coastline of approximately 300 miles. Its emigrant population, depleted by a high mortality rate, was about 6,000. Since 1827 the majority of those sent out by the Colonization Society had been slaves who were emancipated expressly for that purpose,⁴⁸ and many were unfit for pioneering.⁴⁹

It is not surprising, then, that the sense of mission and destiny which inspired the early emigrants was largely missing among the later ones. Between its founding and 1850, Liberia seems to have produced only one outstanding champion of the pan-Negro ideology, the "poet and philosopher," Hilary Teage, son of Colin Teage, who had come from Lott Cary's congregation in Richmond, Virginia. He succeeded Russwurm as editor of the *Liberia Herald* in 1835, and for the next fourteen years used it to express his pan-Negro sentiments. He was certainly the first poet of pan-Negro nationalism: his poetry is concerned with the themes of the past achievements of his race and of a mission to fulfil.⁵⁰ He was also an accomplished orator. He said to a group of Liberians in 1846: "Upon you, rely upon it, depends, in a measure you can hardly conceive, the future destiny of the race. You are to give the answer whether the African race is doomed to interminable degradation—a hideous blot on the fair face of creation, a libel upon the dignity of human nature; or whether they are capable to take an honourable rank amongst the great family of nations."⁵¹ In 1847 he was a representative at Liberia's constitutional conference.

⁴⁸ Up to 1850, 6,116 emigrants were sent out by the Society: 2,315 were born free, 165 purchased their freedom, and 3,636 were emancipated for emigration.

⁴⁹ Edward W. Blyden, *A Voice From Bleeding Africa* (Monrovia, 1856), 26.

⁵⁰ For quotations from his poems extolling the Negro past and urging Liberia to "press towards the prize in glory's race," see Edward W. Blyden, *From West Africa to Palestine* (Freetown, Manchester, London, 1873), 104; also Fredrick Alexander Durham, *The Lone-Star of Liberia* (London, 1892), 1.

⁵¹ Quoted in Wilson Armistead, *A Tribute to the Negro* (Manchester and New York, 1848), 532; also J. A. B. Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples* (London, 1868), 273.

On the whole, however, Liberians did not demonstrate much unity of purpose or public spirit. They were berated by their white governors and their progressive leaders for their "want of self-respect" and their easy dependence on foreign philanthropy.⁵² Socially there had quickly developed in Liberia an American pattern of stratifications based on color, the mulattoes considering themselves superior to the black emigrants while the colonists, generally speaking, held the natives in contempt.⁵³ The Liberians exploited native labor on their plantations, but, on the whole, agriculture was neglected for trading, which brought quick profits without developing the productive capacity of the country.

Until its independence, the supreme authority in the colony was the American Colonization Society. Independence came from the demand by Liberians for, among other things, the sovereign power to deal with recalcitrant European traders scornful of the developing Negro nation.⁵⁴ And so on July 26, 1847, Liberia became a sovereign nation with a constitution modeled on that of the United States.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the constitution contained a provision which was later to keep the young nation in a chaotic political condition: the president, the House of Representatives, and half of the senators were to be elected every two years. Moreover, the franchise was confined mainly to American colonists.

With renewed support from New World Negroes, however, the new nation could have retrieved itself. Such was the view of Edward Wilmot Blyden, probably the most articulate advocate of pan-Negro nationalism in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ Born free⁵⁷ on the Danish West Indian island of St. Thomas in 1832, and educated at the local primary school and by private tuition from his American pastor, the Reverend John Knox, and his own mother, Blyden early decided on the ministry as a career. In May 1850, Knox took him to

⁵² Johnston, *Liberia*, 149, 182-184.

⁵³ Abayomi Karnga, *History of Liberia* (Liverpool, 1926), 45.

⁵⁴ Johnston, *Liberia*, 187-195.

⁵⁵ The basic document was drafted by Simon Greenleaf, Professor of Law at Harvard University, but was somewhat revised at Liberia's constitutional convention; Liberians wrote the preamble.

⁵⁶ See Lynch, *Edward W. Blyden*.

⁵⁷ Slavery was not abolished in the Danish West Indies until 1848, but here, too, there was a small group of free Negroes before general emancipation.

the United States and attempted to enroll him in Rutgers' Theological College, Knox's alma mater. Blyden was refused admission because of his race, and, aware of the operation of the Fugitive Slave Law, he accepted an offer from the New York Colonization Society to emigrate to Liberia.

Even before he left the United States, Blyden expressed pride in the newly independent Negro republic: Liberia, he thought, could "include within its limits the dark regions of Ashantee and Dahomey and bring those barbarous tribes under civilized and enlightened influence."⁵⁸ In his first letter to the United States he described his pleasure at being on African soil: "You can easily imagine the delight with which I gazed upon the land of Tertullian, ancient father in the Christian Church; of Hannibal and Henry Diaz, renowned generals; yes, and the land of *my* forefathers . . . The land here is teeming with everything necessary for subsistence of man." The skeptics, he wrote, should come and see for themselves.⁵⁹ He continued his studies at Alexander High School, a Presbyterian school in Monrovia. In 1858 he was ordained a minister and became principal of the high school. From the beginning of his time in Liberia, Blyden was active in public life, both as a correspondent for the *Liberia Herald* and as editor during 1855-56. Moreover, he remained an active propagandist for Liberia and the cause of emigration, writing often for the *African Repository* (the journal of the American Colonization Society) and for the journals of the New York and Maryland Colonization societies.

Blyden was an articulate and critical defender of his new home, and from an early stage he was concerned about diverting the expected flow of emigration from the United States to Africa, particularly to Liberia. It is probable that his first pamphlet, *A Voice from Bleeding Africa*, published in Monrovia in 1856, appeared just before the emigration conference of 1856 was scheduled to meet in Cleveland,⁶⁰ though there is no evidence that it was discussed there. In the pamphlet he appealed to "colored men of every rank and

⁵⁸ *New York Colonization Journal*, I (Dec. 1850).

⁵⁹ *African Repository*, XXVII (Sept. 1851), 266.

⁶⁰ The conference is discussed below. See also Martin R. Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party* (New York, 1861), for a discussion of the conference.

station, in every clime and country" to support the colonization movement. Moreover, he urged Negroes to take the name of the new state seriously: the object of the creation of Liberia was "the redemption of Africa and the disenthralment and elevation of the African race, objects worthy of every colored man." At the same time, he attacked Liberians for a lack of dedication to the cause:

How painful is the reflection that there are but few of the young men of Liberia who seem to give the future of their country a moment's thought . . . ! O young men and women of Liberia, arise from your lethargy, shake off your puerile notions and practices! It is high time to bestir yourselves to be men and women. Let the brave achievements and noble deeds of your fathers arouse you to effort. Let the future glory that awaits your country kindle within you an honorable ambition and urge you onwards.⁶¹

He wanted to see "the young men of Liberia, like the youth among the ancient Spartans, exercise themselves vigorously in all things which pertain to the country's welfare."⁶²

An opportunity for him to act as a defender of Liberia came in 1852. Gerrit Smith, a veteran abolitionist and member of Congress from New York, in opposing a scheme to send Negroes to Liberia, dubbed the American Colonization Society "the deadliest enemy of the Negro race," and Liberia "a frightful graveyard."⁶³ Blyden attacked Senator Smith for "doing . . . considerable harm . . . by blinding the minds of colored men to their true interests." Colonization in Africa, he contended, was "the only means of delivering the colored man from oppression and of raising him up to respectability." He would not accept the advice of Smith and other abolitionists that, if necessary, free Negroes should retire to Canada to await the outcome of the issue of slavery. Admitting that the mortality rate in Liberia was high, Blyden claimed that this was a temporary condition, common to all pioneer communities.⁶⁴

While Blyden was rebuking Senator Smith, Martin R. Delany, a Negro doctor trained at Harvard and a former newspaper editor

⁶¹ *New York Colonization Journal*, IV (Aug. 1854).

⁶² *African Repository*, XXXI (April 1855), 18.

⁶³ Howard H. Bell, "The Negro Emigration Movement, 1849-54: A Phase of Negro Nationalism," *Phylon*, XX (Nov. 1959), 136.

⁶⁴ *Liberia Herald*, n.s., III (July 7, 1852); also *Maryland Colonization Society*, VI (Nov. 1852), 277-280.

and abolitionist, was devising a scheme based on a Negro empire in the Caribbean and South and Central America. After the passage of the Fugitive Slave Bill, he despaired of American Negroes ever enjoying the full rights of citizenship in the United States. He had grown impatient even with the white abolitionists when he realized that Negroes were "occupying the very same position, in relation to our anti-slavery friends, as we do in relation to the pro-slavery part of the community—a mere secondary, underling position, in all our relations to them, and anything more than this comes by mere suffering." He dismissed with "contemptuous indignation the absurd idea of the natural inferiority of the African," warned Negroes not to carry their religion to the point of hoping for a divine intervention on their behalf, and urged them to support him in constructive action.⁶⁵

His projected empire was to be formed by American Negroes emigrating to South America, an area for which he made two doubtful claims: first, that it was predominantly Negroid and, second, that there had "never existed there an inequality on account of color or race."⁶⁶ His advocacy of a Negro empire in the Americas was partly for strategic reasons: by its proximity it would, either by moral or physical force, bring about the collapse of slavery in the United States. But he also believed that Negroes, as developers of the economic base of the New World, were entitled to their full share of its fruits. Still he did not overlook Africa, which he hoped would be "civilized and enlightened," with Liberia in a "high and elevated position . . . among the nations of the earth." Yet he continued to regard the American Colonization Society as working to promote the interest of slaveholders and was, therefore, severely critical of Liberia's dependence on it.⁶⁷

It is hardly surprising that Blyden and Delany came into conflict.

⁶⁵ See Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States, Politically Considered* (Philadelphia, 1852).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 27. Although Delany's statement was not strictly true, it is true that in Latin American countries Negroes were on the whole better treated than in Anglo-Saxon America. For a comparative study of the treatment of Negroes in the Americas, see Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen* (New York, 1947); also Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 169, 170.

Blyden defended the American Colonization Society and Liberia with some spirit. Delany's plan was a diversion, he wrote, and doomed to failure in any case. Only in Africa could the Negro race rise to distinguished achievement.⁶⁸

Before Delany could act on his scheme, the largest Negro national conference up to that time was convened in Rochester, New York, in 1853, and the persistent division between emigrationists and anti-emigrationists was forced into the open. The anti-emigrationists, led by the Negro leader Frederick Douglass, persuaded the conference to go on record as opposing emigration.⁶⁹ But as soon as the conference was over, the emigrationists, led by Delany, James M. Whitfield, a popular poet, and James T. Holly, an accomplished Episcopalian clergyman, called a conference for August 1854, from which anti-emigrationists were to be excluded. Douglass described this action as "narrow and illiberal," and he sparked the first public debate among American Negro leaders on the subject of emigration.⁷⁰

The conference on emigration met in Cleveland as planned. It was, according to Delany, the most widely representative one ever convened by Negroes.⁷¹ Shortly before it met, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act had provided another triumph for the supporters of slavery. Understandably, the mood of the conference was militant. Delany repeated his call for the creation of a Negro empire in the New World, where "the inherent traits, attributes . . . and native characteristics peculiar to our race could be cultivated and developed."⁷² He warned that "submission does not gain for us an increase of friends nor respectability, as the white race will only respect those who oppose their usurpation, and acknowledge as equals those who will not submit to their rule." They were to take concerted action: "We must make an issue, create an event and establish for ourselves a position. This is essentially necessary for

⁶⁸ *Liberia Herald*, n.s. III (Oct. 6, 1852).

⁶⁹ Cromwell, "Early Negro Convention," 16.

⁷⁰ *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, VI (Oct. 6, 1853 *et seq.*).

⁷¹ Delany, *Official Report*, 6.

⁷² Martin R. Delany, "Political Destiny of the Colored Race of the American Continent," appendix no. 3, in *Report of the Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization* (Washington, 1862), 37-59.

our effective elevation as a people, in shaping our national development, directing our destiny and redeeming ourselves as a race." A Negro empire was further necessary to put "a check to European presumption and insufferable Yankee intrusion and impudence."⁷³

Although the conference adopted Delany's report, there were distinct territorial preferences among those who thought in terms of the Western hemisphere. Whitfield favored colonization in Central America, while Holly opted for Haiti. No public announcement about Africa emerged from the conference, but that too had been discussed. According to Delany: "The Convention . . . in its Secret Session made Africa, with its inexhaustible productions and the great facilities for checking the abominable Slave Trade, its most important point of dependence; though our first gun was levelled, and the first shell thrown at the American continent driving the slave-holding faction into despair . . . Africa was held in reserve"⁷⁴ As a result of the conference, the National Emigration Board was set up. Delany began negotiations with "several states of Central and South America as well as Jamaica and Cuba."⁷⁵ Holly left for Haiti to conduct negotiations there, which, although inconclusive, were encouraging enough to cause him on his return to begin agitating for Negro emigration to that territory.⁷⁶ In August 1856, the biennial meeting of the National Emigration Conference convened again in Cleveland; delegates supported emigration again and decided to organize a publishing company for propaganda purposes.

4

As the conflict between Delany and Blyden shows, it was not merely a dispute between emigrationists and their opponents that was preventing a rapid flow of Negroes back to Africa. The emigrationists were quarreling among themselves. Fortunately for those who wished emigration to Africa, Delany abandoned his scheme

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁴ Delany, *Official Report*, 8-9.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷⁶ James T. Holly, *A Vindication of the Capacity of the Negro Race for Self-Government, and Civilized Progress, as Demonstrated by Historical Events of the Haitian Revolution; and the Subsequent Act of the People since their National Independence* (New Haven, 1857), preface.

for an empire in the Americas, soon after the National Emigration Conference in Cleveland. Whitfield died in California on his way to Central America, and Delany began to develop a positive enthusiasm for Africa, stimulated by the publication in 1857 of works by Thomas Bowen and David Livingstone.⁷⁷ In particular, it was Bowen's "intelligent and interesting account of Yorubaland" which spurred him to explore the Niger Valley in search of a base for a Negro nation.⁷⁸ Even when he turned to Africa, Delany persisted in looking beyond Liberia. His enthusiasm for an expedition to Yorubaland was matched by that of his assistant, Robert Campell, a young Jamaica-born chemist. When the third National Emigration Conference met in Chatham, Ontario, in August 1858, Delany had his plans ready. The conference endorsed the expedition to the Niger Valley as well as Holly's Haitian scheme.

Those interested in West Africa received further help in 1858 when the African Civilization Society was formed, with Henry Highland Garnet as president, to support emigration to that region. Garnet was one of the most aggressive of the American Negro leaders. As early as 1843, he had called on slaves "to rise in their might and strike a blow for their lives and liberties," a counsel which, although it won the endorsement of John Brown, failed to win the general support of Negroes.⁷⁹ He left the United States in 1850 for England, where he lectured as an abolitionist for three years. On his return to the United States in 1855, he became a strong supporter of emigration. He had no sympathy for those Negro leaders who opposed free emigration to Africa simply because slaveholders promoted it, and he castigated Frederick Douglass and his associates as "humbugs who oppose everything they do not originate."⁸⁰ The main object of Garnet's society was "to establish a grand center of Negro nationality from which shall flow the streams of commercial,

⁷⁷ These were Thomas J. Bowen, *Central Africa: Adventures and Missionary Labors in the Interior of Africa, from 1849-1856* (Charleston, 1857), and Dr. Livingstone's *Seventeen Years' Explorations and Adventures in the Wilds of Africa*, John Hartley Coomb, ed. (Philadelphia, 1857).

⁷⁸ Delany, *Official Report*, 10.

⁷⁹ John W. Cromwell, *The Negro in American History* (Washington, 1916), 126; also William Wells Brown, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (Boston, 1863), 149-152.

⁸⁰ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Sept. 3, 1859).

intellectual, and political power which shall make colored people respected everywhere.”⁸¹ Though he preferred such a center to be founded in West Africa through select American Negro emigration, he was not averse to the building of a Negro state in the Americas. Furthermore, by 1858, a few Liberian trading vessels were plying regularly between the Negro republic and eastern American ports. Garnet was impressed by this; the establishment of a vast commercial network between West Africa and Negro America, he wrote, “would do more for the overthrowing of slavery, in creating a respect for ourselves, than fifty thousand lectures of the most eloquent men of this land.”⁸²

In turning to West Africa as the geographical center for their pan-Negro program, the Delany-Garnet groups were not overlooking one of their major objectives: the overthrow of slavery in the United States. The new plan, in theory, represented a more effective strategy: it would bring about the collapse of American slavery as well as annihilate the slave trade at its source. The first object was to be attained by the planting of cotton in the selected sites, with the object of underselling in world markets the cotton produced in the Southern states.⁸³ American Negroes, with their special knowledge of the cotton culture, so it was reasoned, were peculiarly well fitted to succeed in this.

Campell, Delany's assistant, reached West Africa before his leader. On June 24, 1859, he sailed from Liverpool aboard the “splendid ship, Ethiopia,” in the company of an American Negro from New York, John Bennet, who had invested \$125 in two cotton gins and was on his way to Lagos to start an independent venture in cotton growing.⁸⁴ Campell landed at Freetown, Sierra Leone, on July 12, and here met “several natives . . . of respectability and . . . education.”⁸⁵ He made short stops at Cape Palmas and Cape Coast before arriving at Lagos on July 21. Through the acting British consul of Lagos, Lieutenant Lodder, Campell met Okukenu, the Alake of Abeokuta, and found him favorable to the idea of select

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*; also Delany, *Official Report*, 14.

⁸⁴ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Sept. 3, 1859).

⁸⁵ Campell, *Pilgrimage*, 11.

Negro emigration into his territory. Already in the Alake's domains were several hundred emigrants—"semi-civilized" liberated Africans from Sierra Leone who had returned to their homeland or had been repatriated from Brazil and Cuba.⁸⁶ In Campell's view, these emigrants "had inaugurated a mighty work, which . . . must be continued in a higher form by the more civilized of the race." He advocated that emigrants should organize on "municipal" lines. But his goal was that of a "national government" which would require the cooperation and support of native Africans. He therefore advised prospective emigrants to "remember that the existing rulers must be respected, for they alone are the *bona fide* rulers of the place. The effort should be to lift them up to the proper standard, and not to supersede or crush them."⁸⁷

Delany, leader of the Niger Valley exploring party, sailed from New York aboard the Liberian vessel, *Mendi*, on May 24, 1859, and arrived in Monrovia early in July. Also aboard the *Mendi* as an emigrant to Liberia was William C. Monroe, an Episcopalian clergyman from Detroit, a former missionary to Haiti, and former president of the National Emigration Conference, who had come to believe that Liberia was "the chief instrument in determining the future destiny of the Negro race."⁸⁸ In Monrovia Delany received a hero's welcome as he reported to a large public meeting of Liberians, who had come "from all parts of the country," that "the desire of African nationality has brought me to these shores."⁸⁹ At Grand Bassa, a council of "the most eminent Liberians" approved Delany's mission and policy. This meeting gave Delany "one of the most happy hours of his life" and produced in him "an unforgettable and profound sensation."⁹⁰ On July 26, he participated in Liberia's twelfth annual Independence Day celebration, which "came off with grand effect."⁹¹ On August 1, Delany and Blyden, now much

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 18. For the fullest treatment of this, see Jean F. Herskovits, "Liberated Africans and the History of Lagos Colony to 1886" (unpublished dissertation, Oxford, 1960).

⁸⁷ Campell, *Pilgrimage*, 137.

⁸⁸ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Oct. 1, 1859). Holly's *Vindication* was dedicated to Monroe.

⁸⁹ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Oct. 1, 1859).

⁹⁰ Delany, *Official Report*, 23.

⁹¹ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Sept. 24, 1859).

closer together in policy, were speakers at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the emancipation of British West Indian Negroes, celebrated "with great spirit by the leading citizens of Liberia."⁹²

Delany left Monrovia on August 4, 1859, for Cape Palmas, where he stayed six weeks. During his two and a half months' stay in Liberia, Delany moved even further toward Blyden's views: his opposition to the Negro republic had been transformed into support. He was especially impressed with the area up St. Paul's River—its beautiful location, its thriving sugar and coffee plantations, its "live-stock of all kinds," and its neat brick houses.⁹³ Although still wishing to see the Negro republic more self-reliant, he was now able to recommend it to the "intelligent of the race."⁹⁴ Blyden had also been prominent in welcoming Delany. He hailed him as "the far-famed champion of the elevation of colored men," as the "Moses" who would "lead the exodus of his people from the house of bondage."⁹⁵

Delany reached Lagos on September 20, spending five weeks there and winning the confidence of Docemo, king of Lagos. Delany wrote to Garnet from Lagos:

Lagos is a fine, and will be a great, commercial city. It is destined to be the great metropolis of this part of the world. Entirely under a black government, it only wants a few of the right stamp of black men to make it one of the most desirable cities in the world. They bid us come, and to that end the authorities have presented me with two acres of land in the heart of the city plot on which to build my residence . . .

There will be for you and also Mr. J. T. Holly, after our return to Africa, a fine prospect in this rich city of Lagos, where Christians . . . desire to have black instead of white preachers.⁹⁶

From Lagos he went to Abeokuta, where he joined his fellow commissioner, Robert Campell, and together they spent six weeks touring the principal cities of Yorubaland. On their return to Abeokuta, they held talks with the obas and chiefs and, on December 27, signed a treaty that assigned to them as "Commissioners on behalf of the African race in America the right and privilege of settling in common with the Egba people, on any part of the territory

⁹² *Ibid.*, I (Oct. 15, 1859).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, I (Sept. 24, 1859).

⁹⁴ *New York Colonization Journal*, IX (Oct. 1859).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Weekly Anglo-African*, II (Jan. 1861).

belonging to Abeokuta, not otherwise occupied.”⁹⁷ The signing of the treaty was witnessed by the famous African missionary, Samuel Crowther, and his son, Samuel, Jr. Delany had taken the first step, he felt, in “the grandest prospect for regeneration of a people that ever presented itself in the history of the world.”⁹⁸

The expedition had aroused great curiosity and interest in both humanitarian and commercial circles in England; men were deeply divided on the issues of the coming American civil war, and attention was turning to sources of supply of cotton in areas outside the United States.⁹⁹ On their way back to the United States, Delany and Campell arrived in London on May 17, 1860, and on the next day were invited to a meeting “of a number of noblemen and gentlemen interested in Africa’s Regeneration,” held in the parlor of Dr. Thomas Hodgkin. A series of meetings was subsequently called, from which grew the African Aid Society, founded to assist by “loans or otherwise” the emigration of Negroes from North America to Africa for the purpose of cultivating tropical products, including cotton, and of promoting “the Christian Civilization of the African Races and the annihilation of the slave trade.” Though extremely cautious of any alliance with white men, Delany agreed to cooperate with the society after he had impressed upon its members that the relations between the two groups were to involve strictly business, and that Negro emigrants were to be completely free in managing their own affairs. “Our policy,” Delany emphasized, “must be . . . Africa for the African race and black men to rule them.”¹⁰⁰

5

Although Delany had abandoned his idea of an empire in Central America and Whitfield had died, James T. Holly was still active in promoting his scheme for emigration to Haiti. The scheme began to gain support even before Delany and Campell left for West Africa. The emigrationist position was generally strengthened by the Dred

⁹⁷ Delany, *Official Report*, 27.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁹ *New York Times* (Dec. 20, 1860).

¹⁰⁰ Delany, *Official Report*, 64. Thomas Hodgkin was a prominent London physician and philanthropist; see *Dictionary of National Biography*, XXVII, 63-64.

Scott decision of 1857,¹⁰¹ which led directly to the founding of the *Weekly Anglo-African* and the *Anglo-African Magazine* by Robert Hamilton, who in 1859 urged Negroes to "set themselves zealously to work to create a position of their own—an empire which shall challenge the admiration of the world, rivalling the glory of their historic ancestors."¹⁰² Meanwhile Holly was leading his campaign and in 1857 wrote of Haiti's revolution: "This revolution is one of the noblest, grandest and most justifiable outbursts against oppression that is recorded in the pages of history . . . [it] is also the grandest political event in this or any other age . . . it surpasses the American revolution in an incomparable degree."¹⁰³ "Never before," he continued, "in all the annals of the world's history did a nation of abject and chattel slaves arise in the terrific might of their resuscitated manhood, and regenerate, redeem and disenthral themselves: by taking their station at one gigantic bound, as an independent nation among the sovereignties of the world."

His object in recounting this phase of Haitian history was to arouse Negroes of the United States "to a full consciousness of their own inherent dignity." They were to help in building up Haiti "until its glory and renown overspread and cover the whole earth, and redeem and regenerate by its influence in the future, the benighted Fatherland of the race of Africa." As a tactical measure, Holly was against immediate American Negro emigration to Africa: for a start, efforts should be concentrated on building a "Negro Nationality in the New World." Such a successful state would then "shed its . . . beams upon the Fatherland of the race."¹⁰⁴

The Haitian emigration movement received a further fillip when the Haitian government gave it official sanction. The Haitian "Call for Emigration" was issued on August 22, 1859, by R. E. DuBois, Secretary of State for Justice and Public Worship.¹⁰⁵ Haiti's doors were now open to all Negroes who wished to emigrate. Fabre Geffard, the new president who seemed bent on reforming Haitian society, joined in the appeal, inviting Negroes to bring "their arms and

¹⁰¹ John Hope Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1956), 264.

¹⁰² *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (July 23, 1859).

¹⁰³ Holly, *Vindication*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰⁵ *New York Colonization Journal*, X (July 1860); Redpath, *Guide*, 97-99.

minds." He predicted: "Haiti will soon regain her ancient splendor . . . and . . . will be a formal denial, most eloquent and peremptory, against the detractors of our race who contest our ability to attain a high degree of civilization."¹⁰⁶ And F. J. Joseph, Secretary of State for Agriculture, who was directly responsible for settling emigrants, said that "welcoming men of our blood, the victims of these outrageous persecutions, is to continue the work of rehabilitation undertaken by the Founders of the Republic, and to remain faithful to the National Traditions."¹⁰⁷ Among the agents of the Haitian emigration bureau were Holly and Garnet, the latter showing his willingness to support emigration both within the New World and to Africa.

Events in the United States were continuing to give impetus to the emigration movement: the failure of John Brown's raid, the split in the Democratic Party, and the founding of the avowedly anti-slavery Republican Party had both exacerbated feelings against Negroes and increased the interest in emigration. By January 1861, the Haitian emigration campaign seemed to be succeeding. After five weeks in Philadelphia, Holly reported that "the choicest spirits among our people . . . are thoroughly awake to the importance of the present movement and ready to give it their contribution."¹⁰⁸ Garnet also rejoiced "to see that there are more of the colored people . . . in favor of this movement than they are of any other of the present age."¹⁰⁹ Indeed, by 1861 almost all American Negro leaders had given some expression of support to Negro emigration. Even the formidable Frederick Douglass gave in and accepted an invitation by the Haitian government to visit that country.¹¹⁰

Thus, when Delany and Campell returned to the United States in late December 1860, they found that the feeling for emigration was stronger than ever. But Delany did not become involved in a conflict with the Haiti group. He soon let it be known that he was preparing for "a hasty return to Africa where my duty calls me." He

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, preface.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 104

¹⁰⁸ *Weekly Anglo-African*, II (Feb. 16, 1861).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, II (Jan. 26, 1861).

¹¹⁰ Howard H. Bell, "Negro Nationalism: A Factor in Emigration Projects, 1858-61," *Journal of Negro History*, XLVIII (Jan. 1962), 43.

called for the cooperation in his venture "of intelligent persons . . . of various occupations, among whom mechanics and cotton cultivators are acceptable." Select emigration was essential, he felt, to ensure the success of his plan; for "Africa is our fatherland, we, its legitimate descendants, and we will never agree or consent to see this . . . step that has been taken for her regeneration by her own descendants blasted."¹¹¹

Liberians, too, were encouraged by the steady, if moderate, flow of emigrants. In the 1850s, Liberia had settled a total of 5,029—almost as many as had been settled in the previous thirty years. The Negro republic's incorporation of Maryland in 1857 and purchase of territory in the area of the Mano and Gallinas Rivers had given it a coastline of 500 miles. Late in 1860, the Reverend James Payne wrote a series of articles in the *Liberia Herald* entitled "A Plea for Liberia," with a view to arresting the attention of American Negroes and directing their attention to the land of their fathers. And the vice-president, D. B. Warner, a close friend of Blyden's, wrote that he was gratified "that Liberia had begun to make a favourable impression abroad among whites and colored." He hoped American Negroes would "reestablish themselves in this our fatherland."¹¹²

6

There is one more Negro leader who should be mentioned here, Alexander Crummell. He left the United States in 1847 at the age of thirty-six; after graduating from Queens College, Cambridge, he went to Liberia in 1853. As in the case of Blyden, he sought to bring about reform in Liberian society and to impress upon his countrymen their high responsibility.¹¹³ He wanted Liberia to extend its influence and jurisdiction over the inland peoples, and he took a leading part in organizing schemes for exploring and opening up the interior. In September 1860 he published an open letter to win the

¹¹¹ *Weekly Anglo-African*, I (Jan. 26, 1861).

¹¹² *African Repository*, XXXVI (Jan. 1861), 87.

¹¹³ See, for example, Alexander Crummell, *The Duty of a Rising Christian State, Annual Oration Before the Common Council and Citizens of Monrovia, Liberia, July 26, 1855*. (London, 1856).

support of all the American Negro leaders, both emigrationists and anti-emigrationists, for Africa.¹¹⁴

To appease the anti-emigrationists, he rejected the idea that America could never be the home of the Negro, but he maintained that the task of civilizing Africa was peculiarly that of westernized Negroes: "without doubt God designs great things for Africa and . . . black men themselves are without doubt to be the chief instruments." The civilizing process could be accomplished by voluntary emigration, by the pooling of economic resources and inauguration of trade between America and Africa, and by support of the missionary activities of American Negro churches: "From the port of Lagos in almost direct line through a crowded population, and passing by cities containing tens of thousands of people, a highway is now open reaching to Rabba on the banks of the Niger. All through this country the coloured churches of America can send their missionaries, build up Christian churches, and lay the foundation of Christian colleges and universities."¹¹⁵ By utilizing this combination of commerce and Christianity, not only would Africa be civilized, but American Negroes would gain in wealth and respect:

At an early date whole fleets of vessels, manned and officered from the United States and Liberia, would outrival all the other agencies which are now being used for grasping West African commerce. Large and important houses will spring into existence among you, all through the States. Wealth will flow into your coffers, and affluence would soon exhibit itself amid all your associations.

The kings and tradesmen of Africa, having the demonstration of Negro capacity before them, would hail the presence of their black kinsmen from America and would be stimulated by a generous emulation . . . To the farthest interior, leagues and combinations would be formed with men of commerce, and thus civilization, enlightenment and Christianity would be carried to every state and town, and village of interior Africa.¹¹⁶

Crummell, like Blyden and Delany, had strongly supported the founding of Liberia College, on which construction had begun by 1860. The college was to be the first modern, secular English-speak-

¹¹⁴ Alexander Crummell, *The Relation and Duties of the Free Colored Men in America to Africa* (Hartford, 1861), 55.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

ing institution of higher education in tropical Africa. Crummell and other Negro patriots hoped that the college would attract Negro scholars and students from all parts of the world.

Crummell and Blyden left Liberia in February 1861 for England and America, to win financial support for the college and to study institutions of higher learning. In England, Blyden met W. E. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, with whom he had been in correspondence, and Lord Brougham, the great humanitarian, both of whom he sought to interest in the "little Republic" that was destined to "revolutionize for good that whole portion of Africa."¹¹⁷

When Blyden and Crummell arrived in the United States in June 1861, war had already begun between the Union and the Confederacy. But this seemed to make no difference to the plans of the emigrationists. By May, Delany and Campell had joined forces with Garnet's African Civilization Society in an attempt to raise funds to promote colonization in the Niger Valley.¹¹⁸ Campell, "appearing in native costumes," lectured regularly on West Africa and vowed that "my home shall be in Africa though I be the only person from America."¹¹⁹ Delany and Campell had each published a book describing the expedition to the Niger Valley and propagandizing for the cause of colonization.¹²⁰ In November the African Civilization Society increased its strength by gaining the support of men who held high offices in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.¹²¹

Blyden and Crummell joined with the other emigrationists. Blyden himself welcomed the civil war as the "purifier of a demoralised American conscience,"¹²² and no doubt as a means of bringing slavery to an end. However, he warned Negroes that they were deceiving themselves if they thought they could earn proper respect in the United States. He urged them to be makers and witnesses of history: "It need not imply any pretensions to prophetic insight

¹¹⁷ Blyden to Gladstone, May 3, 1861, British Museum Add. Mss. 44396/63; Blyden to Lord Brougham, May 24, 1861, Brougham Papers, University College, London.

¹¹⁸ *Constitution of the African Civilization Society* (New Haven, 1861), 1.

¹¹⁹ *Weekly Anglo-African*, II (March 16, 1861).

¹²⁰ Delany, *Official Report*, and Campell, *Pilgrimage*.

¹²¹ *Constitution of the African Civilization Society*, 4.

¹²² Blyden to Gladstone, June 16, 1862, British Museum Add. Mss. 44398/183.

for us to declare that we live in the shadows of remarkable events in the history of Africa.”¹²³ Crummell asserted that “the free black man of this country . . . is superior to the Russian, the Polander, the Italian” and was now “in a state of preparedness for a new world’s history, for a mission of civilization.” He saw the decline of Anglo-Saxon civilizations in “the moral and political convulsion” within the United States. But “now the Negro is rising and will rise . . . God has destined a great future for the Negro race . . . On the continent of Africa, a civilization of a new type and more noble and generous . . . than has ever existed, is on the eve of starting a new life.”¹²⁴

When Blyden and Crummell returned to Liberia in the fall of 1861, they reported the support of American Negroes for emigration. The Liberian government decided to act: legislation was passed by which Blyden and Crummell were appointed commissioners “to present the cause of Liberia to the descendants of Africa in that country, and to lay before them the claims that Africa had upon their sympathies, and the paramount advantages that would accrue to them, their children and their race by their return to the fatherland.”¹²⁵

The action of the Liberian government had little effect. The outbreak of the civil war was the turning point after which there was a fairly sharp decline in pan-Negro nationalism. At the start of the war, Douglass canceled his trip to Haiti and urged American Negroes to stay and help to decide the outcome of the struggle, advice that apparently found quick response. The emigrationists, who had at first regarded the war as irrelevant to their plans, were unable to act because of lack of funds. The war apart, emigration to Haiti had by December 1861 virtually come to an end because of reports of the high mortality rate among the emigrants and unattractive living conditions.¹²⁶ There was a correspondingly swift decline in emigration to Liberia. By early 1862, Negro leaders were again united to work for the victory of the North. Indeed, when in the

¹²³ Edward W. Blyden, *Hope for Africa, A Discourse* . . . (tract no. 8 from the *Colonization Journal*, 1861), 16.

¹²⁴ *African Repository*, XXXVII (Sept. 1861), 279.

¹²⁵ Cited in the American Colonization Society, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (Washington, 1863), 6.

¹²⁶ Benjamin Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro* (New York, 1962), 120.

summer of 1862 Lincoln decided to put into effect his scheme for gradual Negro emancipation with colonization, he received no support from American Negro leaders.¹²⁷ Thus when Blyden and Crummell returned to the United States as official commissioners in the summer of 1862, to urge American Negroes to "return to the fatherland," they found "an indolent and unmeaning sympathy—sympathy which put forth no effort, made no sacrifices, endured no self-denial, braved no obloquy for the sake of advancing African interests."¹²⁸ Further, Lincoln's proclamation of January 1, 1863, ending slavery, and the use later in that year of Negro troops in the Union army, made American Negroes feel sure that a new day had dawned for them.

In this they were wrong, of course. Although Negroes were awarded political and civil rights during the period of Reconstruction (1867-1877), their hopes of full integration within American society were largely frustrated. This disappointment, continuing throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, again resulted in a desire to leave for other parts of the Americas or for Africa. Many Negro leaders once more urged emigration to Africa: Henry M. Turner, bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church; Pap Singleton; R. H. Cain, like Turner an AME bishop; J. McCants Steward, a lawyer; and J. Albert Thorne, a doctor from Barbados. Their activities are, however, beyond the scope of this article.¹²⁹

7

Pan-Negro nationalists before 1862 did not succeed in creating and sustaining either a return to Africa on a large scale or any significant and persistent contact with African communities. The movement did not come to an end in 1862 and, in spite of the difficulties of the years following the American civil war, it is hardly likely that everyone at the first Pan-African conference of 1900 had forgotten the personalities and events of fifty years earlier. The twentieth-century Pan-Africanists were concerned that Negroes

¹²⁷ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston, 1953), 147-149.

¹²⁸ Blyden, *Liberia's Offering*, 69.

¹²⁹ See August Meier, *Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915* (Madison, 1963).

should mobilize to defend and extend their rights wherever they lived. They held their first congress in London, the most imperial of capital cities, in the middle of the South African War, and increasingly they identified themselves with the larger movement against imperialism.

Nineteenth-century pan-Negro nationalism and Garveyism had much in common. They both owed their existence almost entirely to discrimination against Negroes in the New World, particularly in the United States. They shared a preoccupation with emigration, with a great African past, and with an equally great future, and both relied heavily on leaders from the West Indies, particularly those who had lived in the United States. Nineteenth-century pan-Negro nationalism produced no leader to match Marcus Garvey in the emotional quality of his oratory, the scale of organization and mobilization of resources he achieved, or, indeed, the bitter disillusionment that followed his failure. Though the nineteenth-century movement did achieve a sustained, if limited, emigration, both movements failed to achieve a massive emigration to Africa or its "regeneration."

In their frequent references to the need for action to save Africa, and to prove by deeds the fundamental equality of Africans with other peoples, these Negroes from the New World showed their indebtedness to the societies from which they came. References to the effects of "commerce and Christianity," "the mission of civilization," the great resources of Africa, and the racial bases of society are found as much in the writings of the pan-Negro nationalists as in the writings of missionary groups and subsequently among some believers in imperial rule. It is, however, in reference to "regeneration," with its implication of a great African past, and to the frontal attack on notions of white superiority that the pan-Negro nationalists of the nineteenth century were pioneers.

VII

The Role of Foreigners in Nineteenth-Century Ethiopia, prior to the Rise of Menilek

by

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THE EXISTENCE OF FOREIGNERS in Ethiopia was by no means a new phenomenon in the nineteenth century. The country had experienced foreign contacts since ancient times, and in the Middle Ages several Ethiopian monarchs had requested the rulers of other lands to send them craftsmen, particularly armorers; other foreigners had come as adventurers on their own account. Foreigners resident in the country in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had included Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Syrians, Egyptians, Armenians, Turks, and Indians. These immigrants, though seldom more than a score or two in number, had played a significant role: they were in the main traders or craftsmen and were thus engaged in economic activities which were either unknown to or despised by the natives of the land.¹

The foreign community was still relatively small in the early part of the nineteenth century, limited to a handful of Greeks and Armenians, Arabs, Indians, and Persians who had come to the country on their own initiative. Many of them were traders, but others were craftsmen, particularly blacksmiths, gunsmiths, and jewelers. The growing impact of Europe during the Industrial Revolution, particularly after the advent of the steamship and the British occupation of Aden in 1839 caused the rulers of Ethiopia, then emerging from civil war, to revive the old idea of importing skilled workers from abroad.

The object of this essay is to examine the activities of these foreigners and the attitude of the Ethiopian rulers toward them prior to the advent of Menilek; the period covered, then, includes the situation in Shoa up to 1865, when Menilek became king of that province, and in the rest of the empire up to 1889, the year of his coronation as emperor of Ethiopia. The role of foreigners in the Menilek era owed much to the situation in the earlier period under

¹ R. Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London, 1961), 289-306.

review. The foreign minorities, particularly the Armenians and Greeks who had established themselves in earlier years, continued to play their accustomed economic role. The developments of Menilek's reign were, moreover, based on the principle, established by previous rulers, that Europeans should be imported to undertake whatever work was required of them by the sovereigns of the land.

This utilization of foreign skill had two corollaries that helped to give modern Ethiopia its distinctive character. First, the role of foreigners as the king's servants tended to create the image of foreigners as a race of servants—not a race of masters as they appeared in the areas of Africa subjected to colonial rule. Second, the fact that foreigners came or stayed at the request, or at least with the approval, of the indigenous rulers of the country meant that development was carried out by a variety of European nationals without the dominance of any single foreign nationality. The Menilek era, however, differed from the Ethiopian situation earlier in the nineteenth century: it was a period of innovation that witnessed the founding of Addis Ababa, the establishment of many modern institutions, and the opening of diplomatic relations with the important foreign powers. Many of these developments were linked, either as cause or effect, with the advent of a sizeable foreign community, when increasing numbers of foreigners were employed as advisers and technicians or came as traders and entrepreneurs.

1

Throughout the first part of the nineteenth century, the foreign community in Ethiopia was minute. Excluding Arabs, who were less clearly differentiated from the local populations and were thus often overlooked by visiting travelers and writers, there was little more than a score of foreigners in the country at any one time. Mainly traders or craftsmen, they were principally to be found in three places: Adowa, the capital of the northern province of Tigre and an important town on the main trade route to the coast; Gondar, the nominal capital of the whole empire and a town of considerable trade; and Ankober, capital of the southern province of Shoa and home of Menilek's grandfather, Sahle Sellassie, who reigned from 1813 to 1847.

The foreigners in Adowa in the first part of the century comprised

a handful of Greeks, an even smaller number of Armenians, Egyptians, Englishmen, and Germans, and apparently a lone Italian. In the first decades of the century, the travelers Salt and Gobat both tell of the few Greeks: one, Apostoli, had been in the country over forty years and was a rich trader, and as such fairly typical of the Greeks in Ethiopia who, according to Salt, occasionally went abroad to settle their accounts. There is record of another Greek, Avostalla, who had been a gunsmith; Pearce says he was killed when a cannon exploded. Still another Greek, a Moslem called Nasser Ali, lived in the nearby town of Antalo; he constructed a horse-drawn corn mill and, Salt says, was a loyal subject of the Ottoman Empire who went so far in his praise of the Porte as to tell the Ethiopians that "England was a petty state under the rule of the Turks."²

Some expansion in the Greek population appears to have taken place in the next few decades, mainly as a result of immigration. Mansfield Parkyns, who visited Adowa at mid-century, mentions the presence of several Greek silversmiths, who were "obliged to be rogues" and made "a tolerably good thing of their business . . . by appropriating a large proportion of both the gold and silver entrusted to them for their work." One of them, called Mikael, had previously worked in Khartoum, but had run away from that city with the silver he had been given to make into jewelry. There was also a Greek tailor, variously referred to as Demetrius and Sidi Petros, who had been in the country well over three quarters of a century. Mention is also made of another Greek at Adowa, who was known by the Ethiopian name Walda Rufael and may therefore have been half Ethiopian.³

The Armenian community was smaller than the Greek. Gobat mentions a few Armenians in the 1830s, but at least four are identifiable. They all played a distinct role in the city's life. One, Haji Yohannes, was a metalworker; he was said to have counterfeited Maria Theresa dollars and may well have been the Armenian whom

² H. Salt, *A Voyage to Abyssinia* (London, 1814), 360-361; J. Wolff, *Journal* (London, 1839), 355; S. Gobat, *Journal of a Three Years' Residence in Abyssinia* (London, 1847), 5; N. Pearce, *The Life and Adventures of Nathaniel Pearce* (London, 1831), I, 257-258, Abba Tékla-Haimanot, *Abouna Yacob ou le Vénérable de Jacobis* (Paris, 1914), 79.

³ M. Parkyns, *Life in Abyssinia* (London, 1854), I, 208, II, 16-17, 34, 39, 41-42, 288; Salt, *Voyage*, 404; Tékla-Haimanot, *Abouna Yacob*, 79.

Wolff refers to as making a seal for the local ruler, Ras Wube. The second Armenian was an old man called Gorgorius who had come to the country as a trader with 1,500 Maria Theresa dollars and was reputed to know an excellent specific for venereal disease. The third Armenian, known as Bethlehem, was a native of Tiflis and had an Ethiopian wife. He served in Wube's army and was on one occasion sent to Cairo to purchase arms.⁴ A little later there is evidence of another Armenian called Warque, who seems to have been a trader. Yet another Armenian lived in Chelicut, also in Tigre province, and is described by Krapf as a leather worker.⁵

The Egyptian community left little impression on observers of this time and probably did not have much economic significance. Parkyns mentions only two Egyptians: an old man, Haji Ali, who had formerly been a servant to one of the Mamelukes in Egypt, and a Copt who had been a servant to an Egyptian ecclesiastic.⁶

The English community in the early part of the century comprised William Coffin, the former servant of the British explorer Henry Salt, and a young sailor called Nathaniel Pearce. Both entered the service of Ras Walda Sellassie, the ruler of Tigre, in 1810, and remained in Ethiopia for many years—over forty in the case of Coffin. They were employed by Walda Sellassie and his successors, Sabagardis and Ras Wube, in various matters including the import of arms (always considered very important in Ethiopia).⁷ Their

⁴ E. Combes and M. Tamisier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1838), I, 196-198, 251-252.

⁵ Parkyns, *Life*, 17, 41, 218, 227-228; Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, I, 195, 198-199; T. Lefebvre and others, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1845-1846), I, 53-54, II, 55-56; C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf, *Journals Detailing Their Proceedings in the Kingdom of Shoa* (London, 1843), 503; A. d'Abbadie, *Douze Ans de Séjour dans la Haute-Ethiopie* (Paris, 1868), 37; Tékla-Haimanot, *Abouna Jacob*, 79.

⁶ Parkyns, *Life*, II, 41.

⁷ Salt, *Voyage*, 359-361; Wolff, *Journal*, 346; T. Heuglin, *Reise nach Abessinien* (Jena, 1868), 551; British Museum Add. Mss. 19,343; Pearce, *Life*, *passim*; *Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1848-1868, presented to the House of Commons in pursuance of their Addresses on the 2nd and 5th December* (London, 1868), 7 (hereafter *Correspondence, 1848-1868*); E. A. W. Budge, *A History of Ethiopia* (London, 1928), II, 490; H. Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore* (London, 1896), I, 22.

fortunes doubtless fluctuated from time to time, for a letter of Pearce's, now in the British Museum, relates that on the death of Walda Sellassie he had "fallen into trouble, as I have no relations; and I have not found any Master to feed me, clothe me, and defend my head."⁸ A third Englishman was John T. Bell, a trader and adventurer who joined the service of Ras Wube and later that of Emperor Theodore.⁹

The German community at Adowa numbered three persons, a carpenter called Eichinger, the well-known botanist, Dr. G. H. G. Schimper, and a painter named Christoph Edward Zander. Eichinger, who came to Ethiopia with the German missionary Samuel Gobat, built the church of Cherkos at Adigrat and thus began a nineteenth-century tradition of construction work by Europeans that continued throughout the century.¹⁰ Schimper, who arrived around 1836, was destined to spend almost the rest of his life in Ethiopia. He was appointed by Ras Wube as governor of Enticchio; he was a highly privileged person until the death of the Ras, when he was deprived of his lands. He erected a number of buildings for the ruler, notably a stone church near Debra Egzie. Deeply interested in the country's flora, Schimper also endeavored to introduce new crops, among them potatoes and watercress, both of which he established in the Adowa area.¹¹ Zander worked on the church at Debra Ezgie and commanded Wube's artillery until the defeat by Theodore in 1855, when the German, as we shall see, transferred his

⁸ Pearce to Salt, n.d., BM Add. Mss. 19,343, f. 10.

⁹ C. T. Beke, *The British Captives in Abyssinia* (London, 1869), 20; Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, I, 231; M. E. Herbert, *Abyssinia and Its Apostle* (London, 1867), 147. See also C. Da Terzorio, *L'Etiopia Prima e dopo il Massaja* (Rome, 1937), 80.

¹⁰ Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals*, 512-513; Wolff, *Journal*, 351.

¹¹ T. Heuglin, *Reisen in Nord-Ost Afrika* (Gotha, 1857), 55, 60-70; Herbert, *Abyssinia*, 68, 70; H. A. Burette, *A Visit to King Theodoros* (London, 1868), 47-48; G. Rohlf, *Meine Mission nach Abessinien* (Leipzig, 1883), 324; A. B. Wylde, '83 and '87 in the Soudan, 2 vols. (London, 1888), I, 264; A. Girard, *Souvenirs d'un Voyage en Abyssinie* (Cairo, 1873), 100-101, 121-127, 235; Heuglin, *Reise*, 141; P. N. E. Fournier, *Des Ténifuges Employés en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1861), 10n; J. De Coursac, *Une Page de l'Histoire d'Ethiopie. Le Règne de Yohannes* (Paris, 1926), 23, 141-151; E. Hammerschmidt, "A Brief History of German Contributions to the Study of Ethiopia," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, I, (1963), 43-44.

loyalty to the new emperor. Many of Zander's drawings of Ethiopia, which are now preserved in the British Museum's department of prints and drawings, were published in 1868.¹²

The only Italian in Adowa was a workman called Valieri, whom Wube entrusted with a small old piece of artillery that Salt had imported a generation or so earlier. This weapon, at that time the only one of its kind in Adowa, was considered extraordinary; it was popularly said that it could destroy a mountain.¹³

All of these foreigners, who came without wives or families and in most cases remained for years in the country, tended to become "Ethiopianized." Many of them married Ethiopian women or took them as mistresses. The Greek tailor Sidi Paulos had at least two daughters by an Ethiopian woman; one girl later married the Englishman Pearce, while the other was wedded to an Ethiopian of good family. The Greek trader Apostoli had a half-caste son called Ingida, who, Parkyns says, had been accustomed to eat raw meat—a traditional Ethiopian delicacy—since childhood. Several other foreigners, including Pearce, Coffin, Bell, Schimper, and Parkyns, also had children by Ethiopian women.¹⁴ Parkyns states that some of the foreigners were nevertheless conscious of their common "white descent," and he indicates that they to a certain extent formed a clan among themselves.¹⁵

The foreigners in Adowa were in privileged positions, at least partly because they possessed skills unknown to the rest of the population. On the other hand, often they were detained unwillingly in the country. Parkyns, in a passage expressly referring to the Greeks, seems to have summed up the position of at least some other

¹² Heuglin, *Reise*, 83-84; J. M. Flad, *60 Jahre in der Mission unter den Falaschas in Abessinien* (Basel, 1922), 61-62; British Museum Dept. of Prints and Drawings, 197, a.5; S. F. F. Veitch, *Views of Central Abyssinia* (London, 1868), *passim*; Hammerschmidt, "Brief History," 44.

¹³ P. V. Ferret and J. G. Galinier, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1847-1848), II, 39-43.

¹⁴ Salt, *Voyage*, 403; Parkyns, *Life*, II, 39, 41; BM Add. Mss. 19,348, 70, 244, 276, 278-279, 325; C. Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London, 1869), 340; A. J. Shepherd, *The Campaign in Abyssinia* (Bombay, 1868), 251-252; H. M. Hozier, *The British Expedition to Abyssinia* (London, 1869), 219-220; Tékla-Haimanot, *Abouna Yacob*, 79.

¹⁵ Parkyns, *Life*, II, 41.

foreign nationals when he says that they were "more to be pitied than blamed," for, though "treated with considerable kindness," they were "considered almost as slaves" and were "not allowed to leave the country."¹⁶

The imperial city of Gondar also had its foreign community, but apparently a smaller one. Combes and Tamisier mention a "converted Jew" who for a time served as cook to the above-mentioned Armenian Bethlehem;¹⁷ Rüppell relates that he saw a number of Greek and Egyptian gunsmiths and gun repairers in the city. Some of them, he said, cheated their customers by soldering over the defects in old guns instead of repairing them, a practice that caused many injuries when the solder burst apart.¹⁸ Combes and Tamisier state that the armorers of this time were invariably Greeks, Copts, or Armenians, while d'Abbadie says that Armenians and other foreigners generally acted as metalworkers in Begemder.¹⁹

There were also a number of foreigners in Shoa during the reign of Sahle Sellassie. They included several Greeks, at least one Armenian, and several traders from eastern lands. The principal Greek was an armorer called Elias, who had come to Ankober at the age of fourteen; he taught the soldiers how to shoot, and on one occasion made the king a gun plate that was considered quite an achievement in its day.²⁰ Another prominent Greek was a mason named Demetrius, who built the king a two-story palace at Angolala. With the help of a compatriot called Yohannes, he also constructed a water mill, but it was never used because of opposition from the priests. Demetrius, like so many of his compatriots, took a local wife, whom Harris describes as a "high class dame."²¹ Other foreigners

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷ Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, I, 247; III, 344.

¹⁸ E. Rüppell, *Reise in Abyssinien* (Frankfurt, 1838-1840), II, 180-181.

¹⁹ Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, III, 68-69; d'Abbadie, *Douze Ans*, 211.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 216; III, 8-10; IV, 69.

²¹ C. W. Harris, *The Highlands of Aethiopia* (London, 1844), II, 43, 88, 382; Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals*, 57; C. Johnston, *Travels in Southern Abyssinia* (London, 1844), II, 60, 140; D. C. Graham, *Glimpses of Abyssinia* (London, 1867), 32; G. W. Forrest, *Selections from the Travels and Journals Preserved in the Bombay Secretariat* (Bombay, 1906), 273; Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, III, 27; R. Burton, *First Footsteps in East Africa* (London, 1894), II, 223, 231; P. Soleillet, *Voyages en Ethiopie* (Rouen, 1886), 131-133; L. L.

included an Armenian, called Warqe, who lived at Angolala in the 1840s and was reported to have been a long-time resident in Shoa,²² and a Persian priest Abba Mahlem, who interviewed strangers on Sahle Sellassie's behalf.²³ Other foreigners were to be found among the trading population of the nearby commercial center of Aliu Amba, a community, Johnston says, composed of Indians and Persians as well as Arabs.²⁴

The reign of Sahle Sellassie was notable for the advent of diplomatic missions from France and Britain to Shoa, the arrival of a religious mission composed of the Reverends C. W. Isenberg and J. L. Krapf, both of the Church Missionary Society, and the residence for some time of the British ship's surgeon Charles Johnston. The presence of so many foreigners, though only a temporary phenomenon, was said to have caused great excitement. Krapf relates that, in March 1842, the queen mother exclaimed to him more than once: "What astonishing things we have seen in the time of Sahela Sellasieh! Formerly we only heard of these things and of your White people; but now we have seen with our eyes and believe what we are told."²⁵ Opinion on the whole, however, does not seem to have been very sympathetic to such immigrants. A member of the British mission reported popular prophecies to the effect that the Europeans would come during Sahle Sellassie's reign, but that many of the chiefs were frightened lest the foreigners strengthen the central power of the king.²⁶

The king's attitude was clearly explained by Krapf, who reports that Sahle Sellassie on one occasion observed that "he did not need spiritual teachers so much as doctors, masons, smiths, etc." The missionaries, Isenberg and Krapf, were subsequently expelled from Shoa in 1843. S. P. Haines, the British political agent in Aden who reported that Sahle Sellassie had "interdicted the return of the missionaries to the country," adds: "The cause of the King of Shoa interdicting missionaries from entering his territory, is owing to the

Lande, "Un Voyageur Français dans l'Ethiopie Méridionale," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1878), 889.

²² Johnston, *Travels*, II, 140.

²³ Combes and Tamisier, *Voyage*, III, 27-28.

²⁴ Johnston, *Travels*, II, 87.

²⁵ Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals*, 294.

²⁶ Forrest, *Selections*, 265; see also *Correspondence*, 1848-1868, 511.

power of the Priesthood there, who considered the Reverend Gentlemen have interfered with the religion of their forefathers.”²⁷ Krapf, who also blames the priests for his difficulties, observes: “It was mainly the bigoted priests and monks who tried to inspire the King with a distrust of foreigners. The priests were angry with me especially, because they thought that I had induced the King to allow the admission of the English and their presents.”²⁸

Despite their mistrust of missionaries, the rulers of this period—which also witnessed the modernizing work of Mohamed Ali in nearby Egypt—showed considerable interest in attracting craftsmen from abroad. After the visit of the British nobleman George, Viscount Valentia, to Ethiopia in 1805, the ruler of Gondar, Emperor Gwalu (1801–1818), wrote in the following year to George III of England requesting assistance. According to Valentia, Gwalu’s wishes were “that a person should be sent to him who understood raising water, a medical man, and a carpenter.” The difficulties of communication were considered too great to allow the dispatch of these craftsmen, though the British foreign secretary, George Canning, gave orders that the emperor should be sent such presents as would be acceptable and “at the same time serve as specimens of our finer manufactures.”²⁹

Subsequent rulers of Ethiopia, however, continually returned to the question of importing foreign artisans. In 1827, Sabagardis of Tigre sent his English servant, William Coffin, to England with a request written on his behalf by Coffin on April 24, stating that the chief wanted “one hundred light horsemen for one or two years,” as well as “a Doctor, Painter, and Carpenter, or any other Tradesman, some paints, Saws, Carpenters Tools, and some lead to finish the Churches I have built.”³⁰ The British government found the project impracticable, though Coffin had suggested returning with his brother John and three other men—a surgeon, called Henry Abbott, and two draftsmen, James Warwick and H. Tefeyman.³¹

²⁷ J. L. Krapf, *Travels, Researches and Missionary Labours* (London, 1867), 23; *Secret and Political Reports*; letters from Aden (1843), 137–138, India Office.

²⁸ Krapf, *Travels*, 29.

²⁹ George, Viscount Valentia, *Voyages and Travels* (London, 1811), III, 267.

³⁰ Sabagardis to George IV, April 24, 1827, FO 1/2.

³¹ Mount Morris to Palmerston, Nov. 19, 1829, March 10, 1831; Foreign

But in the end the arrangements failed, and Coffin returned to Ethiopia alone. The idea of importing craftsmen from England did not die; it was revived a decade or so later by a subsequent ruler of Tigre, Ras Wube. Some years later, Pearce, who was rather unlettered, summed up his master's ideas as follows: "it is the Ras' greatest wish for me to mention that he would wish any Tradesman to come and settle here with him; he will give them House, Land and Cattle—such as Carpenters, Black or White Smith or any."³²

Shortly afterwards, Wube made an official request for craftsmen in a letter to the British consul, Walter Plowden, which the latter forwarded to the British foreign secretary, Lord Palmerston, on March 3, 1849. The letter declared: "If you can find five or three workmen if possible at Massowah, if not by sending to your country, builders or masons; bring them for me: if they wish for lands or appointments I will give them plenty; if they wish for wages I will give them wages and take care of them." Plowden gave this request his full support. In his covering letter to Palmerston, he claimed that Wube had hitherto "shown the greatest contempt for all Europeans," but that Plowden's own efforts had succeeded in effecting "a complete change in his ideas." The consul, who added that Wube had displayed a desire for "some European masons to build him a church," then recommended that "one man of creditable attainments as an architect and, if possible, bridge builder, be sent as chief, with four assistants, who should understand stone-cutting and the making of bricks; they should be amply provided with instruments for these purposes and for building." The consul also suggested the advisability of sending out a carpenter with all the tools necessary for his work.³³ A similar demand for European workmen was received from Shoa at almost the same time. On May 21, the British representative in Egypt, C. A. Murray, forwarded a letter of greeting to Queen Victoria from King Haile Malakot, who ruled as King of Shoa from 1847 to 1855. The messenger bringing the letter carried a request that the queen should send the king "persons who can

Office (FO) memo, "The Case of the Abyssinian Agent, Mr. Coffin," Dec. 17, 1831; Backhouse to Barker, May 7, 1822, FO 1/2.

³² Pearce to Salt, n.d., BM Add. Mss. 19,348, f. 13.

³³ Plowden to Palmerston, March 3, 1849, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 29. Plowden was appointed consul on January 3, 1848, and died in February 1860.

make a crown, and make cannons, and paint pictures and build palaces.”³⁴ Such appeals for assistance were destined to frustration. Palmerston immediately dismissed the request from Shoa as impracticable. In a letter of July 4 to the king, he wrote: “Her Majesty commands me to explain to you that the distance between England and your country is great, and the journey occupies much time, and moreover, the workmen in her dominions are at present much occupied.”³⁵

Palmerston, however, at first looked upon Wube’s request with slightly more favor, perhaps because of Plowden’s support. He inquired of the commissioners of works whether the project were practicable and what would be the probable expense. The commissioners replied on July 14, providing some rough estimates of cost but adding that “the climate of Abyssinia, the expense of travelling, conveyance, residence, and personal maintenance, are so little known here that any statement of this Board . . . must be considered only as a proximate estimate.” The commissioners went on to urge that the three or five craftsmen requested by Wube appeared “too few to afford proper aid to each other, or to enable the Chief to form an adequate idea of the value of the services of English workmen”; the craftsmen “should be at liberty to quit the service at their discretion, and be satisfied that, while employed, their personal safety and agreed for remuneration would be secured; as without some such assurance it is doubtful whether respectable English mechanics would be induced to undertake such a service, for which none but men of good character in every respect can be fit.”³⁶

The foreign secretary was apparently discouraged by this communication. On July 23, a letter was dispatched to the commissioners on his instruction, stating that it was not necessary to take further notice of the scheme.³⁷ On the same day he wrote to Plowden:

Considering the difficulties and the expenses which would attend a compliance with Ras Oobeay’s request, it is desirable that you should divert his thoughts from the notion of obtaining the assistance of English work-

³⁴ Murray to Palmerston, May 21, 1849, *ibid.*, 27-29.

³⁵ Palmerston to King of Shoa, July 4, 1849, *ibid.*, 32.

³⁶ Turner to Addington, July 14, 1849, *ibid.*, 34.

³⁷ Addington to Commissioners of Woods and Works, July 23, 1849, *ibid.*, 35.

men; but, if you cannot do so, you must send me some precise and specific information as to the purpose for which these persons would be wanted, and as to the length of time they would be required to remain in Abyssinia . . . It might be possible that the assistance desired by Ras Oobeay might be obtained from India more easily than from England, and the natives of that country would doubtless be quite competent to perform any services which the Ras might require of them.³⁸

(This suggestion of the possible dispatch of Indians is interesting in view of the penetration of Indians farther south along the east coast of Africa.)

Wube, however, was not to be diverted from his aim. On April 2, 1850, Plowden reported to the Foreign Office that the chief "appeared somewhat vexed at the non-arrival of the workmen he had applied for, and pointed out the number of Europeans, Armenians, Greeks, etc., who had resided securely for years in his dominions, as the best guarantee that he could give, trusting that something might yet be done for him." Plowden, who was personally favorable to the project, agreed that, if the foreign secretary wished for "closer intimacy with Abyssinia," it would be worthwhile to procure two or three workmen from India, where they could be obtained more cheaply than in England, who "would probably possess sufficient skill for Oobey's present purposes."³⁹

Palmerston's suggestion had in fact been taken up: he wrote on April 2 to Sir John Hobhouse of the India Office, enclosing copies of the correspondence and observing: "The expense which sending workmen from England to Abyssinia would necessarily occasion, seems to be a sufficient reason for declining to comply with the specific request of the Ras; but I should be glad to have your opinion as to the practicability of engaging persons in India."⁴⁰ Hobhouse replied only on September 3, forwarding a letter from the secret department of the Bombay Military Board, which stated that "well conducted and able men" could no doubt "be procured either from the Department of Public Works or from the European Regiments stationed in India."⁴¹ The foreign secretary, however, seemed determined not to countenance the plan, for on October 1, 1850, he informed Plowden quite bluntly that "Her Majesty's Government

³⁸ Palmerston to Plowden, July 23, 1849, *ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁹ Plowden to Palmerston, April 2, 1850, *ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁰ Palmerston to Hobhouse, June 5, 1850, *ibid.*, 51.

⁴¹ Hobhouse to Palmerston, Sept. 3, 1849, *ibid.*, 54-55.

think it best to let the matter drop; if the Ras should again refer to his wishes in this respect you will say there is much difficulty in bringing such persons from distant countries to Abyssinia.”⁴² Thus in the middle of the nineteenth century, after the invention of the steam engine and the telegraph, Lord Palmerston professed himself unable to send out foreign craftsmen, although this had been undertaken no less than four centuries earlier by King Alfonso of Aragon and although, to take but one other example, the Portuguese had landed as many as seventy craftsmen at Massawa in 1541.⁴³ Despite Wube’s interest in importing foreign skills, his country was obliged to rely on such individual foreigners as might enter the country on their own initiative in search of wealth, adventure, or romance.

2

Emperor Theodore II (1855-1869), with his determination to rebuild his country, to reorganize his army, and to commence the production of modern weapons, was naturally interested in attracting foreign craftsmen.⁴⁴ (His abortive efforts to import workmen from England and the detention of some of the foreigners at his court are discussed in the next essay in this volume.) Well before that time, while still a minor chief, Theodore had employed a certain Dominico, who was half Italian and half Greek, to assist him in military matters,⁴⁵ and he showed signs of wishing to use more European skills. This was recognized by Consul Plowden, who declared that Dejazmach Kassa, as the future emperor was then called, appeared “disposed to encourage strangers.”⁴⁶ Plowden’s declaration was made on July 25, 1853, fully two years before Theodore’s assumption of power. Three days later, Plowden reported to his government that Kassa had shown in his reception of Europeans that “he valued them and their arts far more highly than any other Abyssinian chief has lately been disposed to do.”⁴⁷ Foreigners, it should be repeated, were at that time still relatively unknown in the country. In a report of July 9, 1854, Plowden noted that the Ethio-

⁴² Palmerston to Plowden, Oct. 1, 1850, *ibid.*, 55.

⁴³ Pankhurst, *Introduction*, 289.

⁴⁴ R. Pankhurst, “Theodore II, Empereur d’Ethiopie,” *Présence Africaine*, XLVII (1963), 123-144.

⁴⁵ Herbert, *Abyssinia*, 147.

⁴⁶ Plowden to Russell, July 9, 1854, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 77.

⁴⁷ Memo by Plowden, *ibid.*, 127.

pians had only "a faint conception that a few white men exist beyond the sea, on a spot of ground not worth mentioning; but they do not believe that kings or kingdoms, fruitful soil or genial climate are found save in Abyssinia."⁴⁸

Immediately after his coronation in 1855, Theodore revealed his interest in attracting foreigners to his court. One of his first acts was to appoint Ras Wube's English assistant, John Bell, to the position of his principal adviser. Bell was entrusted with a thousand soldiers, whom he was supposed to give a British military training. But the men did not take kindly to the discipline, and the scheme had to be abandoned.⁴⁹ Theodore also made friends with Plowden and afforded favorable treatment to a third Englishman, Captain Speedy.⁵⁰ Plowden's secretary, Barroni, reported that, as early as April 1855, the emperor had expressed his desire for European engineers and instructors to come to Ethiopia.⁵¹

In the same year Theodore received an offer by Samuel Gobat, then Protestant bishop of Jerusalem, to send him a group of young missionary graduates of the Chrischona Institute near Basel, Switzerland.⁵² These young missionaries were specially trained as craftsmen. The offer was carried by the missionary Krapf, to whom the emperor characteristically replied, "Is Bishop Gobat well? His letter pleases me, and I wish him to send me for the present only three artisans, a gunsmith, a builder and a letter press printer"—by this last designation Krapf thought Theodore meant a die-sinker or a seal engraver—"I will pay them well, and if they are content with what I give them and satisfy me, I will ask Gobat for more workmen."⁵³

Despite the emperor's cautious request for only three men, a larger group was later dispatched, composed of four missionaries

⁴⁸ Plowden to Russell, July 28, 1853, *ibid.*, 77.

⁴⁹ H. Dufton, *Narrative of a Journey through Abyssinia* (London, 1867), 183-184; see also H. Blanc, *A Narrative of Captivity in Abyssinia* (London, 1868), 25; G. Massaia, *I Miei Trentacinque Anni di Missione nell' alta Etiopia* (Rome, 1885-1895), X, 152.

⁵⁰ Plowden to Clarendon, April 7, 1855, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 144; Beke, *British Captives*, 20; G. Lejean, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1872), 10.

⁵¹ Barroni to Bruce, April 15, 1855, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 143.

⁵² H. A. Stern, *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia* (London, 1862), 225.

⁵³ Krapf, *Travels*, 456.

(Flad, Bender, Kienzlen, Mayer) and two gunsmiths who died before reaching the emperor's camp. The members of the workman's mission, as it was called, received a salary of £100 to £120 a year from their missionary superiors; they were treated with kindness by the emperor, who took them along on his military campaigns. Dufton says the missionaries busied themselves for the most part in roadmaking, their presence resulting in "a decidedly improved condition of some of the more frequented routes."⁵⁴ Plowden, in an early report on their activities, stated that Theodore would no doubt view any public preaching by them with disfavor, but allowed them "to ramble about and distribute Bibles as they pleased."⁵⁵

The first group of missionaries was later joined by two other graduates of the Chrischona Institute: Theophilus Waldmeier, a carpenter, and Charles Saalmüller, an ironworker. Three other foreigners, all of them laymen, soon afterwards arrived independently. They were M. Bourgaud, a French gunsmith; Zander, the German painter to whom I have already referred; and Moritz Hall, said to have been a Polish deserter from the Russian army.⁵⁶ Though not themselves missionaries, they made friends with the Chrischona group and joined in their work. Several other missionaries, including Stern, Cornelius, and Rosenthal, arrived from England at about the same time.⁵⁷

The tiny band of missionary craftsmen were settled in June 1860 at Gafat, near the emperor's capital of Debra Tabor, although Flad left his companions for a time to teach among the Falashas, or Ethiopian Jews. Waldmeier relates that he and his comrades built twelve small houses at Gafat so that Flad, Mayer, Bender, Saalmüller, Kienzlen, and himself, together with their families, should each have two houses, one for dwelling and sleeping and the other for cooking. Each member of the party was put to work at his trade, for which, Dufton says, they were well paid by the king.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Flad, *60 Jahre*, 102; Dufton, *Narrative*, 81-82; L. Fusella, "La Cronaca dell' Imperatore Teodoro II di Etiopia," *Annali d'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* (1954-1956), 116.

⁵⁵ Plowden to Clarendon, Nov. 11, 1856, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 173.

⁵⁶ Dufton, *Narrative*, 83.

⁵⁷ Blanc, *Narrative*, 39; Stern, *Wanderings*, *passim*.

⁵⁸ Dufton, *Narrative*, 83; T. Waldmeier, *Autobiography* (London, 1887), 63; Lejean, *Voyage*, 228-229; Fusella, "Cronaca," 105-106.

The missionaries also constructed a large workshop, one hundred feet long, thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high, with strong walls three feet thick. A powerful waterwheel for turning various types of machinery was also erected. Dufton says that no less than a thousand Ethiopians—mainly Galla slaves and Falashas—were employed. One of the former, a man from Kullu in southern Ethiopia, rose to the position of head workman; he did carpentry work “with a skill and neatness to be surpassed by few Europeans working under the same conditions” and displayed “a corresponding vivacity of mind in literary occupations.”⁵⁹ This, it may be added, would appear to be the first reference to foreigners’ being deliberately engaged in the training of Ethiopian craftsmen. Blanc, a British physician who visited the country some years later, reported that the missionaries worked very hard for the emperor; in addition to working on the roads, they made him carriages, pickaxes, and other articles. Later, subordinating their missionary principles to the emperor’s requirements, they agreed to manufacture brandy and, much more important, cannon, mortars, gunpowder, and shells.⁶⁰

The missionaries’ willingness to undertake the production of fire-arms was the most remarkable aspect of the story. It was apparently in 1861 that the question first arose. Dufton, whose account of the matter is perhaps the best, says:

Things went smoothly for some time, until one day orders came from His Majesty to the effect that he wished them to commence the construction of mortars and bombshells. The order came upon them like the bursting of a bomb itself, for none of them had ever had an idea that they would have been required to undertake work of that description. They of course demurred, informing the king that, not having learnt the founding of cannon, they were totally unprepared to enter an engagement of that description, and that if he really desired to have these war implements in his country, manufacturers in Germany, England or France would supply him with a much better article than they could possibly produce.

But this argument carried little weight with the king. He was not in a position to import weapons from abroad because the Turks on the coast had imposed a blockade against him.

The king [Dufton continues] was dissatisfied with their reply: he wished to have these things made in his own country, and to be quite inde-

⁵⁹ Dufton, *Narrative*, 164-166; Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, 73.

⁶⁰ Blanc, *Narrative*, 37-38.

pendent of other nations. They still, nevertheless, objected, more on grounds of inability than unwillingness; but their refusal only vexed the king the more, and he now seized all their servants and put them in chains, there to remain until their masters gave consent to carry out his will.

Since the emperor would not relent in his demands, the craftsmen had no option but to obey.

In their perplexity [writes Dufton], they could not do otherwise than promise to try. Only one of them, Herr Moritz [Hall], could be said to have the slightest acquaintance with the work at all, and his knowledge only extended to the formation of the mould; the clay to be used in the construction of the fire-bricks, the formation of the furnace, the proportion of the metals, and the making of the fuse being equally unknown to him as to the rest. However, by putting their heads together, and seeking information from books, they eventually managed to turn out something. What? A mass of vitreous matter formed by the melting of the fine sand of the bricks; the metal refused to flow. Their only recourse was to try again; and away they went over the country to seek better fire-brick clay, and now another venture was made. The result was a flow of metal that came pouring out in a molten stream now, and all hearts are hopeful that at last their object is gained; but alas! the metal had stopped, and the mould was only half full. They tried again. To the inexpressible joy of these persevering men, and the intense delight of the king himself, their wishes are accomplished, and Debra Tabor for the first time saw the balls souring up into the air and bursting with a loud crash, which made the hills resound with a hundred echoes . . . The success was the cause of great favour being conferred by the grateful king on his "children," as he called them. Shirts of honour, horses and mules with gold and silver trappings, and 1,000 dollars apiece were the reward of their persevering efforts.⁶¹

Blanc confirms that Theodore "behaved very liberally" toward his European armorers. In addition to grain, butter, honey, and other provisions, the emperor gave them large sums of money and honored them by allowing them all the privileges of a Ras.⁶² Besides their craftwork, the missionaries did a certain amount of teaching. Waldmeier and Saalmüller opened a boarding school for poor children: the younger ones were taught reading and writing; the older, useful handicrafts and mechanical work. Waldmeier later

⁶¹ Dufton, *Narrative*, 84-86; see also R. Pankhurst, "Fire-Arms in Ethiopian History," *Ethiopia Observer* (162), VI, 140-146.

⁶² Blanc, *Narrative*, 37.

recalled that the school "brought us into great favour with the king and people."⁶³

The Gafat missionaries proved so useful to Theodore that he was determined that they should not leave. Blanc states that the emperor, "knowing that he would have a greater hold upon them, and that they would have more difficulty in leaving the country . . . ordered them to marry: they all consented."⁶⁴ Some of them married the half Ethiopian daughters of John Bell, and Bender and Kienzlen married the half Ethiopian daughters of Moritz Hall. Men with Ethiopian wives included Mayer, Zander, Plowden, and David Pietro, an Italian servant of the British consul, Duncan Cameron, who succeeded Plowden in 1861.⁶⁵

In addition to the Chrischona group and the friends who had joined them, at this time there were a number of other foreigners in the country. The emperor was always willing to give them work, especially in military matters, which he, in common with his predecessors and successors, considered of paramount importance. Markham, who visited the country some years later, states that Theodore employed in his army a certain Aba Merzam who is described as a "Bengal Jew,"—probably an Armenian—and his son, Ingida Warqe, who was one of the principal gunmen of the day. Kirkham, an Englishman who later served Theodore's successor, states that "two or three" Frenchmen were also employed as army drillmasters.⁶⁶

Armenians and Greeks were still in Ethiopia, though both communities, as we have seen, had intermarried extensively with the local population and were at least partially assimilated. Girard, writing of Adowa in 1868–69, and perhaps exaggerating, stated: "all the workers I saw . . . were of European origin, but not one had the slightest idea of his original language."⁶⁷ Most Armenians and Greeks, as well as their descendants, were at Adowa and other places only for a time under Theodore's control; so they find little

⁶³ Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, 63, 66.

⁶⁴ Blanc, *Narrative*, 37; Heuglin, *Reise*, 305.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 339; Fusella, "Cronaca," 86–87, 116; Markham, *Abyssinian Expedition*, 340–341; Shepherd, *Campaign in Abyssinia*, 251–252; Hozier, *British Expedition*, 219–220.

⁶⁶ Markham, *Abyssinian Expedition*, 347, 371; W. Mac E. Dye, *Moslem Egypt and Christian Abyssinia* (London, 1880), 472; Heuglin, *Reise*, 384.

⁶⁷ Girard, *Souvenirs*, 191; Heuglin, *Reise*, 144.

place in the story of his reign, though it is recorded that an Armenian called Serkis Ciackijian was at one point imprisoned by royal command.⁶⁸ There are also references in this period to foreign merchants of various nationalities who occasionally entered the country for purposes of trade. They include a number of Greeks, one of whom, called Marcopoulo, is known to have traveled between Massawa and Metemma; an Italian called Angelo, who exported coffee and beeswax via Galabat; and two Levantine Christians from Nazareth, Jerjis and Elias. Traders from Arabia and Egypt were also active.⁶⁹

3

Theodore's death on April 13, 1868—a direct result of his dispute with the British government over the question of obtaining artisans from England⁷⁰—was followed by a period of anarchy in which foreigners seem to have played a restricted role. Apart from the Armenians and Greeks, who were more or less permanent settlers, there were few other immigrants. When the British expedition against Theodore was leaving in 1868, Kassa, the ruler of Tigre, requested the British commander, Napier, to lend him two or three of its members to teach his soldiers the use of the weapons which the British had presented him in return for his friendship. British accounts quoted him as stating that “he did not wish to see strangers in his country, but that if strangers came he preferred that they should be Christians.” Napier nevertheless refused the request, saying “that the soldiers belonged to the Queen of England and could not be left behind without her special orders”; but he did hold out the offer that the British authorities in Aden would train anyone whom Kassa sent there.⁷¹ Though disappointed, Kassa succeeded in obtaining the services of an Englishman, J. D. Kirkham, who had participated in Napier's expedition and was destined, as we shall

⁶⁸ Burette, *Visit*, 76-77.

⁶⁹ S. Baker, *The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia* (London, 1867), 70, 503; P. S. Dimothéos, *Deux Ans de Séjour en Abyssinie* (Jerusalem, 1871), I, 34.

⁷⁰ See the next essay in this volume, “The Emperor Theodore and the Question of Foreign Artisans in Ethiopia.”

⁷¹ Hozier, *British Expedition*, 259-260; G. A. Henty, *The March to Magdala* (London, 1868), 264.

see, to contribute significantly to Kassa's emergence as the next emperor of Ethiopia.

Kassa, well aware of the advantages of a British connection, also wrote to Napier privately, asking for rockets and a man to instruct his soldiers in using them. The British government turned down the request, since it had no wish to become further involved in Ethiopian affairs.⁷² Undeterred by this rebuff, Kassa despatched emissaries to England in 1870, with a letter in which he declared, "I should like that somebody would come to me, who might teach any arts or wisdom." The British representative in Egypt, Edward Stanton, who interviewed the envoys in that country, stated that "they are very anxious to induce English Engineers and Artizans to go to Abyssinia, adding that they would be well received and that they are also desirous of obtaining the services of people clever at working mines, as Abyssinia produces gold, silver, tin, lead and coal, but owing to their ignorance of the proper method of working the mines they get but little for them." The British government, remembering the difficulties with Theodore, was unwilling to countenance the employment of British workmen in Ethiopia: Kassa's letter was not answered for a year, and his request for craftsmen was ignored.⁷³

Kassa was also anxious for contact with the French, and declared that the advent of French traders might be beneficial, since the Banyan (Indian) merchants at Massawa had long robbed his country.⁷⁴ After becoming Emperor Yohannes IV in 1871, he wrote a letter to M. de Sarzec, the French consul at Massawa, on December 15, declaring his willingness to tolerate foreigners:

The Europeans in my country, merchants and workers, drink tej [honey wine] and alcohol and get drunk; they fire off their guns, and walk about my town insulting me and my people. Up to now I have not wished to punish them because I wish to remain in good relations with all the powers of Europe. From this day I will allow all European traders to cross my country without paying taxes. I instruct the officers charged with the collection of taxes not to levy any tax on them. When the merchants have come bringing me their merchandise I have paid them properly and have accorded them the right to remain freely in my country. A good workman who has worked well according to my wishes, I have not only paid,

⁷² Kassa to Napier, Aug. 10, 1869; Napier to Duff, Oct. 29, 1869, FO 1/28.

⁷³ Stanton to Granville, Jan. 13, 1871; King to Granville, Jan. 4, 1872; *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Girard, *Souvenirs*, 262.

but have given him signs of distinction so that he should be happy. And, my friend, if in the future, workers wish to come to my country, ascertain if they are good and honest; and if you find them such address me a letter signed by you, sealed with your seal, and then I will receive them well. In the contrary case I will not receive them.⁷⁵

Yohannes was less interested in foreign contacts than his immediate predecessor had been. Holding strongly to the faith of his fathers, the new emperor regarded European missionaries with particularly deep misgivings.⁷⁶ Upon the arrival of a party of Swedish missionaries, according to the Italian explorer Bianchi, the emperor asked: "Are there Jews in your country?" Receiving an affirmative answer, he asked, "And through what country did you pass to reach mine?" "We went through Egyptian territory," they responded. "Then why," he exclaimed, "did you not stay in your own country or in Egypt to baptise the people there; we have no need of this here."⁷⁷

Yohannes reverted to much the same argument in his talks with the English traveler Winstanley, to whom he declared that the British, with all their interests in Egypt, would be better occupied in promoting Christianity in that Moslem country than in Ethiopia, which had already been converted a millennium earlier: "Foreigners," the emperor declared, "I cannot say I love, or trust, but I owe much to the English, and your Queen is, I know, a sincere Christian. Why do foreign nations come here Christianizing Christians? They make trouble in my country, and are not wanted. Are there no men who are pagans to be converted? In the history of my nation, the preachers of foreign religions have filled a bloody and disastrous page. We are Christians like yourselves, with different forms; you represent a Mussulman government, and I find western nations profess a great interest in Egypt. Why do not your European missionaries convert these, your friends, to Christianity?"⁷⁸

⁷⁵ De Coursac, *Règne de Yohannes*, 172-173 (my translation).

⁷⁶ Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, 138; Rohlfs, *Meine Mission*, 225; P. Vigoni, *Abissinia* (Milan, 1881), 80-81.

⁷⁷ C. Bianchi, *Alla Terra dei Galla* (Milan, 1884), 67; see also F. Martini, *Nell' Affrica Italiana* (Milan, 1891), 134. On the attitude of the emperor to General Gordon, an employee of the Moslem Khedive of Egypt, see Malet to Salisbury, Feb. 20, 1880, FO 407/14.

⁷⁸ W. Winstanley, *A Visit to Abyssinia* (London, 1881), II, 243.

The emperor was particularly opposed to Roman Catholic Missionaries. According to Wylde, he expelled all of them from this country, except one priest whom he mischievously left behind as an example of his "immoral character, he having so many illegitimate children."⁷⁹ Wylde, a former British vice-consul, wrote that Yohannes was more favorably inclined toward the Swedish Protestant missionaries, but "was obliged to forbid them from his country, as if he made an exception in their favour other nations would have asked for the same rights."⁸⁰ Determined entirely to remove what he considered a menace to all Ethiopia, he succeeded in getting the missionaries once again expelled also from Shoa, and most of them left Menilek's capital of Ankober on February 10, 1886.⁸¹ Wylde was on the whole sympathetic to the emperor's policy and observes that the missionary in Ethiopia tended to be not a martyr but a "nuisance," and an "intolerant, unmitigated bore." Many of the missionaries, he adds, had "mixed themselves up with politics and matters that did not concern them," and had no one to thank for their expulsion but themselves.⁸²

Despite the emperor's opposition, missionaries were able to expand their activities beyond the borders of the empire, particularly at Monkullo on the mainland near Massawa and at Keren on the frontiers of the Sudan. In both places the missionaries did a certain amount of educational work and made a significant contribution to the training of local craftsmen. At Monkullo, the Swedish evangelical mission ran what Wylde calls a first-class establishment, with school buildings, carpenters' shops, and a smithy. With no consul to bother them, they had "set about their affairs in a quiet manner" and were always ready to help a person to improve himself. They gave a "very useful education," which included a knowledge of such manual work as that of masonry and carpentry.⁸³ Most of the students were Christians who had come from the emperor's domains. But Wylde feared that, since most Ethiopians were strongly attached to their religion, it was "only the most worthless ones"—

⁷⁹ A. B. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London, 1901), 164.

⁸⁰ Wylde, '83 to '87, II, 1.

⁸¹ Waldmeier, *Autobiography*, 140-141.

⁸² Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 91, II, 3-5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, I, 91, II, 1.

people who were "willing to change their faith as they would their clothes"—who were attracted. Any form of Christianity, supported by money, could nevertheless get "any quantity of lambs to feed and clothe." For his own part, he adds, he would never have a male servant who had been near a mission, if he could help it. Female servants were different: they were usually taught to sew, wash, and cook, and were generally clean in their habits.⁸⁴

The other important mission station was at Keren, where the Lazarists were active in the Moslem area. Wylde, who was not generally an unjust critic, states that they were "always a nuisance to the King" and adds: "Through the French mission, France has always her fingers in the pie, and claims to be interested in the country, and doubtless always regrets that in 1870-71 [during the Franco-Prussian War] she was too busy to interfere in Abyssinian politics, as she would have certainly accepted the Hamasen, with its nearly European climate and its natural productiveness."⁸⁵ The Keren missionaries also had an educational role. They ran a printing press and taught the boys in their care printing and sewing, the latter also a subject of instruction for the girl students. But many difficulties were encountered: "The most distressing part of the mission," observed a British observer, F. L. James, "was, as the Fathers and Sisters confessed to us, the difficulty of finding situations for their protégés after they had reared and educated them. Outcast from their own people and unable to find employment under the Mussulman authorities [under Egyptian rule] they are thrown on their own resources, which proves more fatal to the women than the men."⁸⁶

The emperor's distrust of foreigners prevented him from making

⁸⁴ Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 144.

⁸⁵ Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 340.

⁸⁶ *Les Missions Catholiques* (1875), 263, 533; (1880), 213; (1890), 242, 254, 504-505; F. L. James, *The Wild Tribes of the Soudan* (London, 1883), 241-243; C. Hamilton, *Oriental Zigzag* (London, 1875), 197; Rohlf's, *Meine Mission*, 120; S. T. Bent, *The Sacred City of the Ethiopians* (London, 1893), 79; G. Simon, *Voyage en Abyssinie* (Paris, 1885), 33-34; J. B. Piolet, *Les Missions Catholiques au XIXe Siècle* (Paris, n.d.), II, 21, 36, 39, 40, 42, 77; R. Pankhurst, "The Foundations of Education, Printing, Newspapers, Book Productions, Libraries, and Literacy in Ethiopia," *Ethiopia Observer*, VI, no. 3 (1962), 33-34.

as great a use of them as Theodore had, although this would have been easier for Yohannes. The empire, which was now centered on Tigre, was nearer to the coast than Theodore's realm, which had been farther to the west and therefore much more land-locked. So it was not without significance that when a group of Italians and other foreigners, led by a Greek, arrived in 1876, Yohannes declared he had no use for them, although they included a number of craftsmen. Only one of them, an Italian called Giacomo Naretti, remained in the country; still he was used, as we shall see, to good advantage.

Despite his dislike and fear of foreigners, the emperor continued the tradition of previous rulers and employed them as specialists in various essential fields, particularly in military matters. During the first part of his reign, Yohannes obtained the services of a British sergeant, Kirkham, who had taken part in the Magdala campaign. Considered more or less the emperor's chief adviser on military affairs, he played an important part in the defeat of Gobaze, the ruler of Amhara, in 1871, and was rewarded with a fertile estate at Ghinda on the Massawa road. Kirkham was subsequently entrusted with the task of training a select corps of young Ethiopian soldiers. The British traveler De Cosson, who visited the country at this time, recalls that he was "not a little astonished" to hear the commands "present arms," "shoulder arms," "right turn," "left turn," and "quick march," clearly pronounced by an Ethiopian lieutenant in English. The soldier and his companions had been trained by Kirkham. The project, however, was soon abandoned, like Theodore's before it, because the cadets rejected the discipline to which they were subjected. De Cosson was told by Kirkham himself that he had been given two thousand men to train, "but could never keep them steadily at drill for any length of time, as they said they would rather be put to death at once than work so hard."⁸⁷

Other foreigners at one period or another employed in the em-

⁸⁷ E. A. de Cosson, *The Cradle of the Blue Nile* (London, 1877), I, 148-149, 302, II, 63-64; Earl of Mayo, *Sport in Abyssinia* (London, 1876), 37-38, 45, 219; Simon, *Voyage*, 277-279; Massaia, *Trentacinque Anni*, IX, 152-153; Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 310, 315, 323, 333; Rohlf's, *Meine Mission*, 33; Dye, *Egypt and Abyssinia*, 125-126, 180-185, 472, 477; G. Douin, *Histoire du Règne du Khédive Ismail* (Cairo, 1936-1941), III, pt. 2, 326, pt. 3b, 741; R. Perini, *Di qua dal Maré* (Florence, 1905), 186; Allen to Salisbury, Sept. 17, 1879, Wylde to Salisbury, Oct. 20, 1879, FO 407/11.

peror's army included a Swiss adventurer called Louis⁸⁸ and at least three Greeks, Basha Salomides, Dejazmach Nicholas, and a certain Ghiorghis. The latter, who left his native land at an early age, had resided for some time near Kassala before making his way to the emperor's court. He later served Ras Walda of Semien and then Negus Takla Haymanot of Gojam, who awarded him the Ethiopian military title of Balambaras.⁸⁹ At least two half-castes, the sons respectively of the German naturalist Schimper and the English traveler Parkyns, also served in the emperor's forces. Young Schimper, who was taken to England after the battle of Magdala, had studied in Germany, fought against France in the war of 1870, and later returned to Adowa where he became an officer. According to Wylde, he spoke German, Italian, and Amharic very well and had a fair knowledge of English and Arabic.⁹⁰ The son of Mansfield Parkyns was known as Basha John: on being released from Magdala, where he had served as an artisan, he entered the bodyguard of Emperor Yohannes; but evidently he was a man of many skills, for he was put in charge of the customs at Adowa, Hausen, and Adigrat and also worked as a silversmith.⁹¹ Young Schimper subsequently married the daughter of Basha John. Both men served the Ethiopian cause until the advent of the Italians in Eritrea, when they became Italian agents and informers.⁹² The half-caste Zander also obtained work with the Italians.⁹³ Another half-caste in the service of Yohannes is variously referred to as Takla Mikael, Haile Mikael, and Walda Mikael; he supervised the customs at Ferkabar between Wagara and Begemder and was, according to Rohlfs, the

⁸⁸ De Cosson, *Cradle*, II, 11.

⁸⁹ Bianchi, *Terra dei Galla*, 528; A. Zervos, *L'Empire d'Ethiopie* (Alexandria, 1936), 467.

⁹⁰ *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 324; Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 264; De Cosson, *Cradle*, I, 119; Rohlfs, *Meine Mission*, 324-326; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 133; Bent, *Sacred City*, 199; F. Martini, *Il Diario Eritreo* (Florence, 1946), III, 496; C. Conti Rossini, *Italia ed Etiopia* (Rome, 1936), 78.

⁹¹ Fusella, "Cronaca," 116; Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 277; Dye, *Egypt and Abyssinia*, 433; Mayo, *Sport*, 121-122; O. Baratieri, *Memoires d'Afrique* (Paris, 1899), 42; Martini, *Diario*, II, 20 and *passim*; Conti Rossini, *Italia ed Etiopia*, 78, 82, 91.

⁹² Baratieri, *Memoires*, 42, 111; Beke, *Sacred City*, 199.

⁹³ F. Rosen, *Eine deutsche Gesandtschaft in Abessinien* (Leipzig, 1907), 497.

son of a "famous French scholar," possibly Antoine d'Abbadie, who was still alive in 1881.⁹⁴

Foreigners were also prominent in the repair and purchase of guns. They included a Frenchman, Jean Baraglion, a Hungarian called Andre, two Greeks one of whom is referred to as Andrike, and the Italian Naretti. Baraglion, a former communard from Provence, was one of the few people in Adowa who understood the new Remington rifles that began to pour into the country in the 1870s;⁹⁵ he did a very profitable trade as a gunsmith and, according to Wylde, was so successful that he forced all his rivals out of the trade, enjoying a monopolistic position throughout the northern provinces.⁹⁶ He had an Ethiopian wife and was obliged to take *kosso*, the local cure for tapeworm, because of his love of raw meat. His principal trouble was that the emperor considered him too useful to be allowed out of the country; like so many of the earlier foreigners in Ethiopia, Baraglion was prevented from leaving. He also did a certain amount of gunsmith work,⁹⁷ while Andrike, who seems to have been a merchant, visited Europe on the emperor's behalf to purchase arms and other supplies.⁹⁸ Harrison Smith also mentions a Greek armorer who had come to Adowa from Shoa.⁹⁹

Naretti was primarily a builder and carpenter, and in employing him as such the emperor was following the tradition of such earlier rulers as Ras Wube and Sahle Sellassie, both of whom used foreigners in the construction of churches and palaces. Naretti undertook a number of important tasks for the emperor, including the construction of the palace at Makale. The English diplomat Portal, who inspected it shortly afterward, says that the Italian "personally superintended the laying of every stone" and "with his own hands cut out and fitted nearly all the joints of the wood work." He also built palaces at Aksum and Samara, near Debra Tabor, and carried

⁹⁴ Girard, *Souvenirs*, 234; Rohlf, *Meine Mission*, 249.

⁹⁵ Pankhurst, "Fire-Arms," 135-180.

⁹⁶ Mayo, *Sport*, 47; Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 293, 298-299; Rohlf, *Meine Mission*, 158, 169, 315, 334; Simon, *Voyage*, 138-139; C. Zaghi, *L'Ultima Spedizione Africana di Gustavo Bianchi* (Milan, 1930), II, 165, 229; Girard, *Souvenirs*, 240-251.

⁹⁷ De Cosson, *Cradle*, I, 184.

⁹⁸ Zervos, *L'Empire*, 467.

⁹⁹ F. Harrison Smith, *Through Abyssinia* (London, 1890), 195.

out the woodwork for a number of churches, including the church doors at Adowa. Long resident in the country, he married the half Ethiopian daughter of Theodore's German craftsman Zander. After the arrival of the Italians in Eritrea in 1885, Naretti found his position at the court of Yohannes no longer tenable.¹⁰⁰

Another foreigner, whom the emperor utilized in a very different capacity, was a Greek physician, Dr. Parisis, who personally treated the monarch and thereby set the tradition for later rulers of Ethiopia (who made a point of encouraging European medicine).¹⁰¹ The Hungarian armorer Andre also made artificial arms and legs for bandits whose limbs the Emperor had amputated as a punishment; Andre charged ten Maria Theresa dollars per limb and was also given gifts of grain, honey, and meat; it is said that when the king first saw the artificial limbs, he could not believe his eyes.¹⁰²

Other craftsmen of lesser importance who served Yohannes included Naretti's younger brother, who died in 1881,¹⁰³ and a French or Swiss artisan called Dubois, who built the church of Medhane Alem at Sokota.¹⁰⁴

4

In addition to the foreigners in the emperor's service, there were, as in the past, a certain number of foreign traders and craftsmen as well as a small but growing number of entrepreneurs. These groups of foreigners were largely drawn from the Greek and Armenian communities.

The Greeks had been in Ethiopia throughout the nineteenth

¹⁰⁰ Smith to Baring, May 20, 1886, FO 403/87; De Cosson, *Cradle*, I, 114, 120, 184; G. Branchi, *Missione in Abissinia* (Rome, 1883), 17; Bianchi, *Terra dei Galla*, 7-11, 18-23, 63-64, 221; Rohlf's, *Meine Mission*, 47-48, 196, 200-201, 205, 226; Simon, *Voyage*, 205; Martini, *Diario*, I, 601, IV, 335; F. Lemmi, *Lettere e Diari d'Africa* (Rome, 1937), 62; Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia*, 229-230, 237; Zaghi, *L'Ultima Spedizione*, II, 173, 233; Smith, *Through Abyssinia*, 227-232; J. Naretti, "Abyssinie," *L'Exploration* (1879), 122-124; Mantegazza, *Gli Italiani*, 309; G. Chiese and G. Norsa, *Otto Mesi d'Africa* (Milan, 1888), 279-280; A. Sapelli, *Memorie d'Africa* (Bologna, 1935), 71; Ministero degli Affari Esteri, *L'Italia in Africa* (Rome, 1955), II, 148-152.

¹⁰¹ Zervos, *L'Empire*, 467; *L'Italia in Africa*, II, 178.

¹⁰² Girard, *Souvenirs*, 262.

¹⁰³ Rohlf's, *Meine Mission*, 47-48.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 181.

century and emerged as a community of traders, entrepreneurs, and craftsmen. A handful of Greek traders were prominent at Adowa and Asmara, as well as in the import-export activity at the port of Massawa and across the western frontier at Keren and Kassala. One of the most prominent among them at the time of the Italian occupation of Asmara was Marcopoulo, who first began to trade in the area in the 1860s.¹⁰⁵ A certain amount of Greek enterprise can also be found in other fields. In the 1870s, F. L. James mentions several Greeks growing tobacco in the Keren area, while to the east at Ghinda, also under Egyptian rule, the earl of Mayo wrote of a Greek called Aristides who was cutting olive trees for export to Egypt.¹⁰⁶ As the principal European community in Ethiopia, the Greeks constituted something of a link between the country and the outside world. Thus Harrison Smith observed in 1866: "At present, the King and his subjects derive all their knowledge of the political doings of Europe from the traders." He added that the Greeks in question were "without exception of a bad class."¹⁰⁷

The Armenian community, which seems to have been largely based on new immigration in the latter part of the nineteenth century, resembled the Greek in many ways, but tended to concentrate somewhat more on handicrafts and a little less on trade. This difference between the communities was to become more marked in the Menilek period. The leading Armenians in Adowa included two goldsmiths, Garabet Warqe and Dickran Ebeyan, both of whom had been born in Constantinople, and a trader Boghos Marcarian, who came from Sivas in Asia Minor. Garabet Warqe married an Ethiopian wife and educated two of his sons, Gabre and Mercha, at Bombay; they were later employed by the emperor as interpreters.¹⁰⁸ Ebeyan (1845-1926) arrived at Massawa in 1881 and worked as a jeweler for the emperor, but only remained about a year in Tigre before traveling south to Ankober in Shoa. He subsequently

¹⁰⁵ Sapelli, *Memorie*, 38.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, *Through Abyssinia*, 195, 245; James, *Wild Tribes*, 240; Mayo, *Sport*, 50; Beauclerk, "Memorandum on the Commerce of Massowah," Oct. 12, 1886, FO 403/88; S. Baker, *Nile Tributaries*, 70.

¹⁰⁷ Smith to Baring, May 20, 1886, FO 403/87.

¹⁰⁸ Dimothéos, *Deux Ans*, I, 149; see also Pankhurst, "Foundations of Education," 249.

made crowns for Emperor Menilek and his consort, Taitu, and also carried out certain commissions for King Takla Haymanot of Gojam.¹⁰⁹ Marcarian (1830-1922), who came to Ethiopia in 1867, lived in Adowa for five years and then requested the emperor's permission to leave for Gojam. Yohannes refused and advised him to go to Shoa; the Armenian was very well received there by Menilek, who sent him on a mission to Egypt and gave him an extensive property at Liban near Mount Zuquala, not far from Addis Ababa.¹¹⁰

Foreigners of other nationalities were also found as traders, entrepreneurs, and craftsmen. Among the traders mention may be made of a Syrian merchant called Elias, who traded between Gojam and Massawa.¹¹¹ In the entrepreneurial field several Frenchmen were active on the periphery of the empire. One, who had an Ethiopian wife, ran a sawmill for the governor of Massawa at Subaguma, inland from the port; another tried to make a substitute for rubber out of the *qulqual* tree or *Candelabra euphorbia* that grew east of Keren; a third, Constant Demange, grew tobacco at Keren; a fourth, who operated in partnership with a Maltese, set up an unprofitable business at Kelamet on the Massawa-Keren road for the manufacture of fiber from wild aloes.¹¹² In handicrafts, the gold- and silversmiths of Gondar, according to Rohlf, were mainly Greeks or Moslems converted to Christianity, while one of the silversmiths of Adowa was the half-caste Englishman, Basha John.¹¹³

5

The examination of Ethiopian economic life in the period covered here indicates that foreigners played a significant and distinctive role, as in the past, and that most Ethiopian rulers were anxious to attract them to the country. Gibbon was exaggerating in his famous phrase: "Encompassed by the enemies of their religion, the Aethi-

¹⁰⁹ Zervos, *L'Empire*, 495; Guèbrè Sellassie, *Chronique du Règne de Mén-élik* (Paris, 1932). I, 275-276, 322.

¹¹⁰ Zervos, *L'Empire*, 493-494.

¹¹¹ Branchi, *Missione*, 32.

¹¹² De Cosson, *Cradle*, I, 34, 36-37; Wylde, '83 to '87, I, 70-71; James, *Wild Tribes*, 248; Simon, *Voyage*, 12, 34, 45.

¹¹³ Rohlf, *Meine Mission*, 266; for John, see note 91 above.

opians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world by whom they were forgotten." The prevalence of foreigners, and the strong interest in attracting them, may be attributed partly to the low esteem in which commerce and manual work were regarded by the majority of the local population,¹¹⁴ and partly to the country's isolation and technical backwardness; both factors, of course, rendered it difficult for Ethiopians to acquaint themselves with modern techniques.

Since the majority of the population was reluctant to engage in such essential occupations as trade and handicrafts, an economic vacuum was created that was filled by foreigners and by minority groups. The extent to which each predominated varied from occupation to occupation. The vacuum in the field of trade drew many foreigners to the country, especially Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians, though they met with a certain amount of competition from the local population, particularly among the Moslems, who tended also to be a trading class.¹¹⁵ The foreigners, who had better contacts outside the country, were dominant in large-scale business, while the local Moslems handled the greater part of the retail trade. The vacuum in handicrafts produced a more complex situation. The oldest and basic types of work, such as those of the weaver and the blacksmith, were generally carried out by local minority groups, mainly by the Falashas and Moslems, but the newer occupations provided an area in which foreigners made a significant contribution. Greeks and Armenians thus acted as silversmiths and goldsmiths, while the occasional Greek, German, or Italian was found useful in the construction of palaces and churches.

The advent of modern techniques and inventions, above all in the area of firearms but to a lesser extent in medicine, produced a demand for new skills, which no section of the local population possessed. Since the society displayed a marked inability to inno-

¹¹⁴ R. Pankhurst, "Status, Division of Labour and Employment in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Bulletin*, II, no. 7 (1961), 7-57.

¹¹⁵ R. Pankhurst, "The Trade of Northern Ethiopia in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of Ethiopian Studies*, II, no. 1 (1964), 64-120.

vate,¹¹⁶ the rulers of the country were faced with the alternatives of relying on foreigners or of stagnating in a world of increasing technological progress. The ruler's choice depended largely on his personality and the circumstances of his reign, some monarchs paying greater attention than others to the utilization and import of foreigners.

The foreigners came mostly from technically advanced countries, Germany, France, England and Italy, though often Greeks, Armenians, and Egyptians also possessed sufficient skill to do useful work. In the case of firearms, the alternatives facing the rulers were starker than in any other sector: no less than innovation or threatened annihilation. Thus almost all the emperors and princes of Ethiopia were at one in their desire to obtain makers and repairers of guns, as well as men who would import military equipment or train soldiers in its use.

Although there were naturally variations depending on individual circumstances, the foreigners who arrived in Ethiopia, whether they came on their own initiative or at the sovereign's request, tended to be treated with courtesy. They were regarded, like most of the minority groups and even like the slaves, as persons with specific occupations in which ordinary Ethiopians did not engage, but which were nonetheless essential. On the other hand, foreigners, provided they were Christians, were allowed to take wives from among the local Christian population, even from daughters of good families, which would have been impossible for slaves or native craftsmen, who were despised as an inferior class.

The foreigners were, on the whole, treated aloofly by the Ethiopians, who considered them servants or technicians. Ethiopians gave orders, and the foreigner was to execute them. Only in rare cases would a foreigner rise to a position of trust, and still more rarely to one of influence. Yet foreigners were readily accorded a position of economic privilege. They were frequently prevented from leaving the country, but this was considered a manifestation of the royal prerogative—a sign of their necessity rather than an unfriendly action against them. Even when detained against their will,

¹¹⁶ R. Pankhurst, "Misoneism and Innovation in Ethiopian History," *Ethiopia Observer*, VII (1964), 287-330.

they were usually well rewarded for their services and were often given large estates with many tenants to serve them.

It may be concluded that the traditional Ethiopian attitude to foreigners, that they could execute but not dictate policy, rendered it easy for the rulers of the country to use them rather than to be used by them. On the other hand, the idea that foreigners were a class apart, with specific occupations largely outside the experience of the local people, had serious consequences—it meant that until the advent of Theodore there was little attempt to get them to impart their knowledge to the native population. The skill of the individual foreigner, then, often died with him and was in any case not diffused among the inhabitants at large. Later Ethiopian economic development led to a greater employment of foreigners. It was, however, based on established precedents of how to employ them, as well as on the more dynamic policy of using them to train Ethiopians, an idea that Theodore, the modernizing genius of mid-nineteenth-century Ethiopia, had done much to pioneer.

VIII

The Emperor Theodore and the Question of Foreign Artisans in Ethiopia

by

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THE IMPORTING OF CRAFTSMEN from England was one of the life ambitions of Ethiopia's Emperor Theodore (1855-1868); this played a central role in the dispute with the British government, which culminated in the expedition to Magdala of 1867-68. Theodore was described by Clements Markham, the historian of that expedition, as the most remarkable man of nineteenth-century Africa.¹ Determined to revive the former greatness of Ethiopia, he considered the utilization of foreign skills essential to that end.² In the early 1860s, he returned to Ras Wube's idea of procuring craftsmen through the good offices of the British government. The story of Theodore's frustrated attempts to obtain these workmen constitutes an important chapter in the history of nineteenth-century Ethiopia's relations with the outside world.

1

The first British consul in Ethiopia, Walter Plowden, died in 1860 and was succeeded by Duncan Cameron, who wished to persuade the emperor to agree to the establishment in Ethiopia not only of a British consulate, but of one with the right to try all cases involving British subjects. This demand for extraterritorial rights had been rejected when Plowden presented it in 1855,³ but Cameron repeated it on October 22, 1862, in a letter to the emperor in which he declared that it would be impossible for British artisans to live in Ethiopia "unless there was an officer of some kind, either Envoy or Consul, to look after them."⁴

Though anxious to persuade the emperor of the impossibility of

¹ C. R. Markham, *A History of the Abyssinian Expedition* (London, 1869), 354; see also R. Pankhurst, "Theodore II, Empereur d'Ethiopie," *Présence Africaine*, XLVII (1963), 123-144.

² Pankhurst, *ibid.*

³ Plowden to Clarendon, June 25, 1855, *Correspondence Respecting Abyssinia, 1848-1868 presented to the House of Commons, in pursuance of their Addresses of the 2nd and 5th December 1867* (London, 1868), 152.

⁴ Cameron to Theodore, Oct. 22, 1862, *ibid.*, 222.

obtaining craftsmen without first accepting a consulate, Cameron did not in fact wish to make the latter a *sine qua non* of sending the artisans, for he was strongly in favor of the project, believing that the presence of British workmen would strengthen British influence in the country. On November 2, he wrote to the British political resident in Aden that there "need be no fear of bad treatment" for British subjects in Ethiopia, since the lay missionaries already in the country were "very liberally dealt with." Urging the need for permanent English influence in Ethiopia, he asked the resident to suggest to the British authorities in India that an envoy be sent with suitable presents and several doctors, "plentifully supplied with surgical instruments and medicines." "His Majesty," Cameron added, "also wants an engineer to make roads for him. Such a gentleman might likewise be sent." Turning to the potential value of the craftsmen from Britain, he continued: "such persons would keep up our knowledge of what was passing, and certainly exercise an important influence on the opinions as well as the conduct of the king, especially if they did not aim at this as their principal object. Besides which, we would have placed him under an immediate and serious obligation." Cameron then recommended that craftsmen be sent out from Britain before they could be supplied by any other power and that the men selected should be persons "of great tact and patience" and "entirely conciliatory and unpretending: as much, in short, like lay-missionaries as possible."⁵

Cameron's proposal, like that of Plowden before it, failed to interest his superiors in London, who preferred to remain on good relations with the Ottoman Empire rather than to alienate it by befriending Ethiopia. The project of dispatching British artisans to Theodore was therefore ignored. The emperor, who was acutely proud of his rights as a sovereign and not a man to be trifled with, was naturally offended. But even new vistas of humiliation were soon to appear before him. A letter he wrote to Queen Victoria in November, suggesting the dispatch of an embassy, was also unanswered. Though this may have been no more than an administrative oversight, it reflected the British Foreign Office's lack of interest in the matter. To the emperor, however, this neglect appeared

⁵ Cameron to Political Resident, Aden, Nov. 2, 1862, *ibid.*, 223-224.

to be an expression of British contempt. His anger at the discourtesy was intensified in the spring of 1863 when Cameron visited the western frontier province of Bogos, which was then under threat of Egyptian attack. Far from championing the Christian population of the area, as Plowden had done, Cameron visited the Turkish pashas at Kassala and Metemma, with whom he exchanged expressions of friendship, thus giving the impression that he was intriguing with the enemy, and that Britain in fact condoned, if it did not actually favor, Egyptian aggression. Furthermore, some months later the emperor received news from the Ethiopian monks in Jerusalem that they had been deprived of their deeply cherished convent in the Holy Land, and that the local British consul, Noel Moore, had abandoned his predecessor's policy of protecting them from the Turks.

To understand the significance of these events, it must be realized that Jerusalem meant no less to Theodore and other Ethiopians of his time than it had to the Western Crusaders of old. The withdrawal of British protection from Ethiopians residing there seemed particularly ominous and, correctly or not, appears to have been interpreted by Theodore as implying that the British recognized the Turkish claim that all Ethiopians were subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Theodore, for his part, regarded the age-old conflict between Christian Ethiopia and its Moslem neighbors as more or less inevitable; he found it almost inconceivable that the British as Christians should not be his allies, all the more so in view of Plowden's earlier expressions of friendship. Perhaps because of his anger at the British for failing to implement their supposed policy of friendship, he took offense at the conduct of two foreign missionaries, H. A. Stern and H. E. Rosenthal, whom he held partly responsible for defaming him in European eyes: Stern had written a book, *Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia*, in which he declared that Theodore's mother had once sold *kosso*, the medicine traditionally used in treatment of tapeworm, while Rosenthal was reported to have spoken badly of the emperor, declaring that the country would have been better off under the rule of the Turks.⁶

⁶ H. A. Stern, *The Captive Missionary* (London, 1868), 35, 67-68; C. T. Beke, *The British Captives in Abyssinia* (London, 1867), 118-119.

Briefly, the result of the emperor's mounting anger was that he imprisoned the British consul and the two offending missionaries. A British envoy, Hornuzd Rassam, a former assistant to the political resident in Aden, who was sent to attempt their liberation, was also detained.⁷ These acts, it should be emphasized, were less remarkable in the Ethiopian context than they might seem to European eyes. Ethiopian noblemen, let alone foreigners, were traditionally unable to leave the court without the sovereign's permission, and such permission was by no means always granted.⁸ It was, moreover, a well-established fact that Europeans in Ethiopia during the Middle Ages had frequently been prevented from returning home.⁹ The detention of Europeans in Africa was nonetheless considered in Europe as a most remarkable event and led to grave concern in England.¹⁰

It was in these circumstances that the question of obtaining craftsmen from England was again raised by Theodore. Waldmeier quotes the emperor as declaring on April 16, 1866, that he needed craftsmen from Queen Victoria "to open my eyes and guide me from darkness to light," because, he added, the Ethiopians were "uncultured, untaught and in all things stupid, wild, blind and like donkeys."¹¹ Almost at the same time, Theodore sent Rassam a message in which he said: "My desire is that you should send to Her Majesty the Queen and obtain for me a man who can make cannons and muskets, and one who can smelt iron, and an instructor of artillery. I want these people to come here with their implements and everything necessary for their work, and then they shall teach us and return. By the power of God, forward this our request to

⁷ H. Rassam, *Narrative of the British Mission to Theodore* (London, 1869), II, 82-121.

⁸ R. Pankhurst, "Status, Division of Labour and Employment in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethiopia," *University College of Addis Ababa Ethnological Society Bulletin*, II, nos. 1, 7 (1961).

⁹ A. H. M. Jones and E. Monroe, *A History of Abyssinia* (London, 1935), 62; R. Pankhurst, *Introduction to the Economic History of Ethiopia* (London, 1961), 290.

¹⁰ See, e.g., H. M. Stanley, *Coomassie and Magdala* (London, 1874), 283; Beke, *British Captives*, 1-3.

¹¹ T. Waldmeier, *Erlebnisse in Abessinien* (Basel, 1869), 54.

England.”¹² This emphatic desire to use foreigners in teaching the local people was, it should be noted, something quite new in Ethiopian history.

Rassam, who had been placed in detention and thus had good reason to be diligent in explaining the emperor’s wishes, reported to the British foreign secretary, the Earl of Clarendon, on April 18, 1866, that Theodore had “for some years a desire to procure some scientific men from England.” On the previous day he had spoken to Rassam “about obtaining for him two or three men who could teach his people to make cannons, muskets and shot, and how to melt iron; also an instructor of artillery. He said he wished these persons to come to him with their instruments and everything necessary for their work, and after they had taught his people they should be allowed to return . . . His Majesty would be much obliged to Her Majesty’s Government if his request could be complied with.”¹³

Not satisfied with normal diplomatic channels, the emperor, who kept a close guard over all foreigners and would not allow any to leave, ordered Flad, one of the German lay missionaries, to London and gave him instructions to procure craftsmen together with all the equipment they might require. Theodore gave Flad a letter that had apparently been translated by one of the German missionaries:

I am sending Mr. Flad to Europe because I am in want of skilful artists. All those workmen who would like to come to my country, rejoicing in their coming, I shall receive them with honour, and give them good pay for their services. If they wish to remain in my country, I shall make them most happy. But, if they after having teached [*sic*] my people their arts for some years, wish to return to their country, I shall, through the power of God, give them a splendid pay, and with great honour I shall send them back to their country.

Flad’s instructions were to engage two gunsmiths, an artillery officer, an iron founder able to build a foundry and furnace, one or two boatbuilders, and a cart- and wheelwright. In addition, the missionary was ordered to purchase a small blast steam engine, a

¹² Theodore to Rassam, n.d., *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 568; Rassam, *Narrative*, II, 101.

¹³ Rassam to Clarendon, April 18, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 467.

turning bench with all necessary tools, a distilling machine, machinery for the production of gun caps together with the copper plate required, a gunpowder mill, a large supply of gunpowder and gun caps, a number of double-barreled guns and pistols, two regimental swords, a good telescope, some handsome square carpets, silks, tumblers and goblets, and a few European curiosities.¹⁴

Some weeks after Flad's departure, the emperor again pressed Rassam, asking him to write to the Bombay government for workers who could cast cannon. "I told him," Rassam reported, "that Bombay, being a dependency of England, the authorities had no power to do as he requested without the sanction of England."¹⁵ Flad, meanwhile, was making his way to Europe and, on his arrival in England, at once set about his task with enthusiasm and diligence. He requested an audience with Queen Victoria and produced a lengthy report for the foreign secretary in which he pointed out that European workmen had hitherto been well treated by the emperor, that the latter had spent 30,000 Maria Theresa dollars in gifts of money and other things for the British representatives, Plowden, Cameron, and Rassam, and that, if the British government were willing to invest even a fraction of this sum, all necessary engagements could be made.¹⁶ Shortly afterward, on July 18, Flad wrote to Theodore declaring, "Her Majesty's Governors take everyday great trouble to find the artizans your Majesty wants."¹⁷

The British authorities, who had long dallied with the question and had already brought the dispute with Theodore to a head by ignoring his letter of November 1862 to Queen Victoria, were by now alarmed by the detention of their envoys and had, at least, realized some sense of urgency. Lieutenant-Colonel William Merewether, the British political agent in Aden who was responsible for Ethiopian affairs, urged that the emperor should be presented with the articles on Flad's list and that

¹⁴ Flad to Clarendon, n.d., Theodore to Flad, n.d., Rassam to Clarendon, May 27, 1866, *ibid.*; see also Beke, *British Captives*, 472, 478, 484, 230; K. St. C. Wilkins, *Reconnoitering in Abyssinia* (London, 1870), 31-32; G. Douin, *Histoire du Règne du Khédive Ismail* (Cairo, 1936-1941), III, pt. I, 331.

¹⁵ Rassam to Merewether, May 28, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 486.

¹⁶ Flad to Clarendon, n.d., *ibid.*, 475-476.

¹⁷ Flad to Theodore, July 18, 1866, *ibid.*, 479.

efforts should be made to obtain the services of an enterprising, well educated person, who would proceed to Abyssinia to set up the machinery which Government sends out, and who would be able to do what the King most requires, to teach some of his people the use of machinery, and how to take advantage of what his country contains. This person should be able to superintend everything, and might take with him four or five men of his own selection, who would work under him as smiths, carpenters etc. It is better so than to send simple artisans by themselves, who being under no control would quickly destroy themselves by excesses, or fatally offend the King. He and they should go out entirely of their own free will and accord; should be fully informed of the risk they run, and that they are to serve the King for three years or longer, if agreeable to both parties. That Government are not responsible for their safety, or that they shall be allowed to return punctually at the end of three years; for this they must depend on themselves, and on their satisfying the King. If they work well for him, I am confident, and so is Mr. Flad, that they will not only be perfectly safe, but that they will be highly honoured, and greatly enriched.¹⁸

After expressing confidence that a suitable person could be found who would be "glad of so good an opportunity of advancing himself,"¹⁹ Merewether added:

All I think would be required of Government in the event of a person being met with is that his expenses and those of his companions out, also his and their salaries until they joined the King, should be paid by the Government; and . . . that Government should guarantee the payment, to any persons appointed by them in England, of their full salary for the three years according to the sum agreed on, should it so happen that the King failed to remunerate them himself according to the compact, that their health yielded to the effects of climate, causing their return home, or death, and their salary was not paid by the King, or that their lives were taken by the King or lost in his service, and he failed to recompense their friends. Beyond the above, Government is to have nothing to do with them.²⁰

As far as the actual arrangements were concerned, Merewether proposed that the superintendent, his assistants, and the equipment should leave England for Aden about the middle of September 1866, so that the journey inland from Massawa into Ethiopia could be made that year after the rains.²¹

¹⁸ Memo by Merewether, Aug. 16, 1866, *ibid.*, 492.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

Before he finished drafting this report, Merewether had interviewed an Irishman, Matthew Talbot, whom he had found "exactly the sort of person required" as superintendent. In later talks it was proposed that Talbot should set forth with seven assistants: a gunsmith, a fitter, an iron founder, a smith, a ship's carpenter, and two ordinary carpenters. All personnel would receive a salary from the Emperor from the day of their arrival at his camp, but until then they would be paid by the British government, which would also be responsible for travel expenses and an outfit allowance.²² The proposal was warmly welcomed in government circles. On August 18, only two days after Merewether produced his document, the Foreign Office wrote to the Treasury, requesting the necessary funds on the ground that "no reasonable means should be neglected" to obtain the release of the captives. Three days later the secretary of the treasury replied that the scheme had been approved.²³

2

The result of the emperor's bold action in detaining Cameron, Rassam, and some of the missionaries was that the dispatching of artisans to Ethiopia, which had been in the air for almost two decades and had been actively sought by Theodore for several years, was decided upon and authorized in less than a week. Flad proudly reported back on September 1 that "the business Your Majesty sent me for to England is, through the grace of Christ our Lord, accomplished. The artists [*sic*] Your Majesty was anxious to get are found, and ready to come with me to your country." On the question of the detainees, he added: "Regarding Your Majesty, Queen Victoria is a little grieved, saying, 'why has the Emperor Theodore not sent over to me the prisoners, whose relations are daily weeping before me?' In reply to this I said, 'After having conveyed the artists to Your Majesty I shall come back, and bring the released prisoners over with me to England.' This hope I gave to Her Majesty."²⁴

For the next few weeks, the scheme prospered. Talbot set about obtaining the machinery, but it was a slow business since all items

²² *Ibid.*, 493-495.

²³ Murray to Treasury, Aug. 18, 1866; Hamilton to Hammond, Aug. 21, 1866, *ibid.*, 496-497.

²⁴ Flad to Theodore, Sept. 1, 1866, *ibid.*, 503.

had to be made in small pieces for transport in Ethiopia, then a country almost totally without roads. Merewether, however, expected that everything would be ready by October 10, little more than three weeks after the date originally specified. By September 17, the craftsmen had drawn outfit allowances, and their contracts were ready for signing. On the following day Merewether reported that the machinery was "progressing well" and should be ready on schedule.²⁵

At about this time or shortly afterward, however, Flad received a letter from his wife, which led to an abrupt change of policy in London. The note, dated July 7, was written in a pessimistic vein: it spoke of the captives' "gloomy future" and revealed that Theodore, who was irritated with the British and had been further stirred up against them by a Frenchman called Bardel, had actually imprisoned the captives (who until then had merely been under a kind of restrictive detention). But the St. Chrischona "workman's mission" at Gafat had not been arrested and were "making a very large cannon" for the emperor, who was still friendly toward them.²⁶ Flad, who was greatly distressed by the insecurity of his wife and friends, reacted on September 19 by declaring that the British government should abandon the idea of sending out the craftsmen. "It is no advantage," he now wrote to Merewether, "to send him [Theodore] the required artisans, because the release of the prisoners would, I fear, not be obtained. Most likely he would go on requiring other things from the British Government to which they never could surrender . . . I deem it advisable that Her Majesty's Government should at once use stronger terms."²⁷

Theodore's hard policy, which had brought the project to the very brink of success, had thus miscarried, in part perhaps because slow communications between Ethiopia and Britain prevented the emperor from knowing that his earlier action had already achieved the desired result. No one in London paused to reflect that the emperor's latest act, as described by Mrs. Flad, had taken place almost

²⁵ Merewether to Murray, Sept. 17, 1866, *ibid.*, 504-505; see also Merewether to Murray, Sept. 18, 1866, *ibid.*, 505; Merewether to Hammond, Nov. 5, 1866, *ibid.*, 533-538.

²⁶ Pauline Flad to J. M. Flad, July 7, 1866, *ibid.*, 508.

²⁷ Flad to Merewether, Sept. 19, 1866, *ibid.*, 508.

two months before the writing of Merewether's memorandum, or that Flad's letter to Theodore, written on September 1—almost two months after Mrs. Flad's—might yet produce the satisfactory settlement. Instead Merewether wrote a new memorandum, dated September 25, in which he stated that his earlier analysis had been "most materially altered by the news contained in Mrs. Flad's epistle." The imprisonment of Rassam was "so gross an outrage and insult to the English Government that simple adherence to the original plan is rendered impossible." Merewether then recommended that Flad be sent back to Ethiopia with a letter from Queen Victoria pointing out what her intentions had been, but stating that her government could not tolerate the imprisonment of British subjects. "Their immediate release and safe conduct beyond the Abyssinian frontier should be demanded in the first instance, and should this demand not at once be complied with, the King of Abyssinia should be distinctly told that he will be made to answer for the consequences, and for the evils which he will bring on his country."

Despite this hardened attitude toward Theodore, Merewether also proposed that the question of the artisans should not be completely abandoned, but should be made dependent on the release of the captives. He went on to suggest that the craftsmen and machinery be sent as already planned to Massawa, "so that should matters have again changed, and the King make a proper *amende*, harsh measures might still perhaps be avoided." On the other hand, if "the King still retains Mr. Rassam and the others in close confinement, and will not comply with the demand made upon him by the English Government, then I would strongly advise that no further delay should be allowed; but that the question should be taken up vigorously, and every means adopted to show that the promptest measures would be taken to compel him to do so, and to punish him for his insulting outrage."²⁸

Merewether's new memorandum, like its predecessor, provided the starting point for renewed official discussion, the more so since Merewether appeared to have produced a compromise between conflicting views. On the one hand, the Cabinet considered it "in-

²⁸ Memo by Merewether, Sept. 25, 1866, *ibid.*, 508-510.

expedient, not to say impossible, to proceed to extremities.”²⁹ On the other hand, the German missionary, J. L. Krapf, warned that any concessions would give Theodore the prestige of being a “lion-like King” who had “humbled the greatest nation of Europe.” Krapf advocated the use of force, claiming that a mere two or three thousand Englishmen could “completely overthrow the numerous army of the King” and that it would be most desirable for Ethiopia to be “regulated, if not permanently occupied by a European Power.”³⁰

Merewether, it should be noted, at no stage advocated foreign occupation. He elaborated his position in a letter of October 1, 1866, to the Foreign Office, urging that Flad be sent to the emperor with a message from the queen, and that he (Merewether) would follow with the artisans and equipment, to go no further than Massawa unless a satisfactory reply were received. “If the King received Flad properly and was inclined to change his tactics,” Merewether argued, “the fact of my following with artificers and presents would be a convincing proof to him of the desire of Government to act in fair and full faith towards him, and may afford a good opening for adjustment of differences.” If Theodore persisted in his “violent and unjustifiable” course of action, the artisans could be sent back to England, and little more cost would have been incurred than was originally intended. “The artificers,” Merewether concluded, “would not be allowed to enter Abyssinia unless matters were materially changed from what they now are, and then only at their own choice and free will. They are willing to go, provided there is not more than ordinary risk attendant on living in a country where law affords no protection, and the will of a despotic monarch is the only rule.”³¹

The British Cabinet, however, was for the time being reluctant to take risks of any kind. Unprepared to concur in Krapf’s idea of invasion, it was also unwilling to support Merewether’s scheme of promising Theodore the artisans on the condition that he release the prisoners. Nor was the Cabinet prepared to assume the responsi-

²⁹ Merewether to Murray, Oct. 1, 1866, *ibid.*, 513.

³⁰ Krapf to Stanley, *ibid.*, 511, 513.

³¹ Merewether to Murray, Oct. 1, 1866, *ibid.*, 513-514.

bility of countermanding its earlier orders for the preparation and dispatch of workmen and machinery—perhaps because this would have further angered the emperor. The Cabinet's decision was, therefore, to adopt Merewether's idea of sending the emperor a letter of remonstrance from the queen, but to allow the government the maximum freedom of action by omitting from it any mention of the craftsmen. The letter (written on vellum) declared that the detention of Her Majesty's servants and the other Europeans had given rise to uncertainty about the emperor's intentions, with the result that

we cannot allow Flad to be the bearer of those tokens of good-will which we purposed that he should convey to Your Majesty. But in full confidence that the cloud which has darkened the friendship of our relations will pass away on the return of Flad, and desiring that you should as soon as possible thereafter receive the articles which we had proposed to send to Your Majesty in token of our friendship, we have given orders that those articles should be forthwith sent to Massowah, to be delivered for conveyance to Your Majesty's Court to the officers whom you may depute to conduct our servant Rassam, and our servant Cameron, and the other Europeans, so far on their way to our presence.³²

The all-important question of the workmen was thus ignored, though it was clearly the question in which the emperor, already deeply mistrustful of the British government, was primarily interested. The omission of any mention of the craftsmen was deliberate, as is apparent from a letter written to Flad by the foreign secretary, Lord Stanley, on October 8:

You will see, that the letter from the Queen speaks only of presents to be sent in return for the prisoners. You are not authorized to hold out any expectation that the British Government will be directly or indirectly instrumental in inducing any other Europeans to place themselves in the power of the King. You will not conceal from the King that, in coming to a decision to that effect, the British Government have been mainly influenced by the intelligence that has lately reached them; but it will rest in your discretion to point out that, if the King really desires to obtain the services of foreigners, his best chance of doing so is to prove, by releasing those whom he now detains against their will, that any persons who may enter into his employment may have no apprehension of similar detention when desirous to depart.³³

³² Victoria to Theodore, Oct. 14, 1866, *ibid.*, 514-515; Rassam, *Narrative*, II, 233.

³³ Flad to Stanley, Oct. 8, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 516.

Despite these strong words, no steps were taken to cancel the workmen's contracts or to find them alternative employment. On the contrary, the sailing order was not countermanded, and the responsibility for deciding whether or not they should make their way into Ethiopia should Theodore prove reasonable was left to Merewether and the men themselves. On October 27, Merewether reported that they were due to board ship at Southampton on November 3 and were supposed to set sail on the following day.³⁴ Lord Stanley's secretary replied that the foreign secretary was glad to hear that arrangements had advanced, but did "not understand that any special instructions are required for the guidance of your conduct in this matter." The letter concluded: "If the prisoners arrive, the presents may be exchanged against them; but as regards Mr. Talbot and the artisans, their departure for the interior, of which no promise has been held out to the King, must be regulated by circumstances, and if at the last hour you should feel doubt as to their safety you may suspend your departure, or at all events, after stating the case to them, leave them to decide whether they will go or not. You will in no case urge them to go if disinclined."³⁵

Talbot and six assistants, John Brampton, Richard Joy, William Lewer, George Carr, John Morris, and Charles Bowers, left Southampton as planned on November 4, 1866.³⁶ On the following day, Lord Stanley's secretary wrote to Merewether, giving the foreign secretary's final instructions that "you should not put yourself or any other European in the power of the King unless the prisoners are safely delivered."³⁷ Despite the queen's letter to the emperor, and the foreign secretary's explanatory note to Flad, it now seemed that the British government did in fact envisage sending out the craftsmen under certain circumstances.

Although the foreign secretary appeared to be thinking in terms of allowing Theodore to have the workmen, Flad, the man on the spot, had become a strong advocate of a tougher policy. On reaching Massawa, he wrote to the emperor on October 29, explaining "why Her Majesty's Government would not send up the workmen

³⁴ Merewether to Hammond, Oct. 27, 1866, *ibid.*, 518-519.

³⁵ Hammond to Merewether, Oct. 31, 1866, *ibid.*, 519-520.

³⁶ Merewether to Hammond, Nov. 5, 1866, *ibid.*, 522-528.

³⁷ Hammond to Merewether, Nov. 5, 1866, *ibid.*, 521.

before he sends over the prisoners."³⁸ A plaintive letter from Mrs. Flad, telling her husband that the prisoners were in chains,³⁹ convinced him that there was "not the least hope" of Victoria's letter⁴⁰ having any effect. "There is only one way," he declared on November 5, "which the Government ought to take without delay. Captain Cameron . . . gives the advice to go to war at once; and this, I think, is the opinion of all."⁴¹

3

In the next months it became increasingly evident that there was no chance of reconciling the emperor's demands with the British offers, for both sides adopted rigid positions. Theodore's dispute with the British, as Sylvia Pankhurst observes, now developed "with the inevitability of a Greek tragedy till its culmination in his defeat and death by his own hand."⁴² The artisans reached Massawa on December 10,⁴³ but official policy dictated that they should not be sent inland until Theodore released the captives. The emperor, on his part, seems to have made it clear that he would not do this until the arrival of the artisans. His attitude was described by W. Staiger, one of the German missionaries at his camp, who declared that the emperor "would not enter any conditions" as he believed that "he alone has to make conditions." Irritated at the distrust shown by the British, he had said, according to Staiger in 1868: "The English ought to trust me and send me the articles and men I want of them."⁴⁴

Theodore left no doubt about his passionate desire for the workmen. On January 5, 1867, he wrote to Rassam, appealing to him in Biblical language:

Now, in order to prove the good relationship between me and yourself, let it be shown by your writing and getting the skilful artisans and Mr.

³⁸ Flad to Hertslet, Nov. 5, 1866, *ibid.*, 538.

³⁹ P. Flad to J. M. Flad, n.d., *ibid.*, 539-540.

⁴⁰ See note 32 above.

⁴¹ Flad to Hertslet, Nov. 5, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 538.

⁴² S. Pankhurst, "Advancing Ethiopia," *New Times and Ethiopia News*, no. 549 (1946), 4.

⁴³ Merewether to Stanley, Dec. 10, 1866; Merewether to Stanley, Jan. 15, 1867, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 544-545, 547-548.

⁴⁴ Staiger to Merewether, Jan. 2, 1867, *ibid.*, 581.

Flad to me. This will be a sign of friendship . . . Even Solomon, the son of David, the great King, God's created being and slave, when he wished to build the Temple in Jerusalem, was perplexed [about finding skilful artisans]. Falling at the feet of Hiram of Tyre, he begged him for carpenters and skilful artisans, who assisted him in building the Temple . . . As Solomon fell at the feet of Hiram, so, I under God, fall at the feet of the Queen, and her Government, and her friends. I wish you to get them [the artisans] . . . in order that they may teach me wisdom and show me clever arts; when this is done I shall make you glad and send you away."⁴⁵

Rassam, however, remained unmoved and was opposed to any policy but one of force. His comment on January 10 was that it was impossible to trust Theodore any longer: "Presents and artisans may be sent him, but what security have we that he would let us leave Abyssinia?"⁴⁶ On January 29, the envoy reported that Theodore had expressed the wish for Merewether "to come up with the artisans and the things from England."⁴⁷ But Rassam's own opinion, and that of his fellow captives, he said, was that "the sooner the crisis comes the better for us."⁴⁸ On February 15, Merewether informed the Foreign Office that he had "with great regret" come around to this view, and added somewhat comfortingly that the emperor's once large army had dwindled to only a fraction of its former size.⁴⁹

Merewether, who had thus joined forces with the advocates of British military intervention, began to impugn the emperor's motives. On March 4, he wrote to the foreign secretary that Theodore wished to "get more people into his power so as to have greater hold on the English." It was the emperor's belief, Merewether went on, that control of the artisans would "enable him to get anything he chooses to ask for." Theodore's position was, however, already on the decline: he had become "desperate," his enemies were "closing round him," and his power was "daily getting less and less." Everything was therefore favorable to the British. Provided they made it clear that they were intervening only to punish Theodore and would then leave the country, they would meet with little opposition. The

⁴⁵ Theodore to Rassam, Jan. 5, 1867, *ibid.*, 569-570.

⁴⁶ Rassam to Stanley, Jan. 10, 1867, *ibid.*, 560.

⁴⁷ Rassam to Merewether, Jan. 29, 1867, *ibid.*, 582.

⁴⁸ Rassam to Merewether, Jan. 29, 1867, *ibid.*, 583.

⁴⁹ Merewether to Stanley, Feb. 15, 1867, *ibid.*, 556-59.

war would be "a popular measure" in England, and, though the operations would entail expensive outlays, the money would be "spent in restoring easily, and at comparatively small cost, the prestige of our name, which is reckoned lower than it should be."⁵⁰

The question of the workmen was now overshadowed by the probability of war. Merewether's letter of March 4 recommended that Talbot and his colleagues return to England. This proposal was accepted by the foreign secretary on April 20, with the result that the men sailed home on May 11; the presents were kept a further three months in Massawa in the hope of an eleventh-hour settlement.⁵¹ By May 1, Merewether was urging the government to insist on the emperor's unconditional surrender.⁵²

Theodore and Flad, neither of whom perhaps realized quite how much the situation had deteriorated, were still contemplating the possible arrival of the craftsmen. On June 11, Flad reported to Merewether a conversation he had had two days earlier. Theodore is supposed to have said: "Though the English are too proud to send me workmen, God has given me, in Mr. Waldmeier and Saalmüller, workmen who can do every work for me; but I tell you if they don't come now and fight for their Mr. Rassam I shall keep him and force them to give me what I want from them." Apparently unaware that Talbot and his assistants had been sent home, Flad had replied that "the artisans and machinery are waiting his order at Massawah, according to Her Majesty's letter; and it would be a pity if those clever men and useful machines would not come to Your Majesty's Court." To this Theodore, who doubtless remembered that the queen's letter contained no reference to the workmen, cryptically had replied, "well we must see the letter, if we can get it, perhaps we can get them all."⁵³

The time for negotiation, of course, had passed, for neither side was willing to talk. On September 9, the foreign secretary wrote to Theodore that the queen had ordered a military force to enter his dominions and that "the only means of preserving your country

⁵⁰ Merewether to Stanley, March 4, 1867, *ibid.*, 577-579.

⁵¹ Merewether to Stanley, May 11, 1867, *ibid.*, 631; see also Stanley to Theodore, April 16, 1867, *ibid.*, 610.

⁵² Merewether to Stanley, May 1, 1867, *ibid.*, 626.

⁵³ Flad to Merewether, June 11, 1867, *ibid.*, 717.

from war, and your own power from overthrow, will be found in the delivery to the Commander of the British invading army of all the Europeans in your keeping."⁵⁴ Six weeks later, on October 21, the British advance brigade landed on the coast, the British commander, Sir Robert Napier, arriving there on January 3 of the following year, 1868. Then followed the long trek to the emperor's fortress at Magdala; here, on April 10, the British won a decisive battle.

Realizing that he had lost in his long struggle with the British government, Theodore made his first attempt at suicide on April 11. Failing in this also, he ordered the release of the prisoners. The situation was obviously so critical that all the Europeans elected to go. Together with their families, they were 61 in number, with no less than 187 Ethiopian servants and 323 animals. The foreigners included the official British party, composed of Consul Cameron, his secretary L. Kerans, and his servants or former servants D. Pietro, J. Macraire, and R. McKelvie; Rassam and his aides, Lieutenant Prideaux and Dr. Blanc; the group of missionaries not in the emperor's employ, made up of the H. A. Stern, H. E. Rosenthal and his wife, W. Staiger, and F. Brandeis; the workmen's mission and a number of other craftsmen, including Waldmeier and his wife, Saalmüller, T. M. Flad and his wife, Bender and his wife, Zander and his wife, Mayer, Mrs. Zieglen (the widow of a German artisan), Moritz Hall and M. Bourgaud (two craftsmen who were not missionaries), and Ato Aligaz, the son of the Englishman John Bell; the botanist Schimper, two German naturalists, T. Essler and K. Schiller, and A. Bardel, a French artist and language teacher. There were also numerous half-castes, including Ingida Schimper, the son of the botanist, John Parkyns, the son of the traveler Mansfield Parkyns, as well as four children of the craftsmen: Kassa Zander, Yaeqob Moritz, Yohannes Mayer, and Gotthelf Bender.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Stanley to Theodore, Sept. 9, 1867, *ibid.*, 713.

⁵⁵ Markham, *History*, 340 and n; A. J. Shepherd, *The Campaign in Abyssinia* (Bombay, 1868), 251-252; Rassam, *Narrative*, II, 29; H. M. Hozier, *The British Expedition to Abyssinia* (London, 1869), 219-220; H. M. Stanley, *Coomassie and Magdala* (London, 1874), 436; Beke, *British Captives*, 204; Rassam to Clarendon, April 18, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 467; T. Heughlin, *Reise nach Abessinien* (Jena, 1868), 302-305, 339; E. A. de Cosson, *The Cradle of the Blue Nile* (London, 1877), I, 119-120; II, 66; L. Fusella, "La Cronaca

After handing over the foreigners, Theodore still thought it possible to obtain some artisans. In his last letter to the British envoy on April 12, 1868—the day before his death by suicide—he wrote: “Now that we are friends you must not leave me without artisans, as I am a lover of the mechanical arts.”⁵⁶

The question of the supply of foreign artisans, though by no means the sole, or even the most important, cause of the dispute with the British government, was thus in the emperor’s mind to the end. In trying to import the possessors of skills virtually or completely unknown in his own country, Theodore was following the path of Ras Wube, but he seems to have been the first to have placed particular emphasis on the training of his own people. Throughout this struggle—from the detention of Rassam in 1866 to Theodore’s death in 1868—the issue of foreign artisans was a major one. Theodore was able to induce the British government to abandon its attitude of indifference, to engage a group of artisans, and to provide for the expense of equipping them and sending them to Africa. Yet Theodore failed to reach his objective, a failure for which he clearly bears a major responsibility. Partly this was because of poor communications, partly because Theodore gave the impression, by imprisoning his captives, that concession would only lead to a further turning of the screw. However, British negotiators were slow to abandon the scheme and placed the artisans on the borders of Ethiopia, to enter as soon as the prisoners were released. But that minimal degree of confidence between parties which is necessary for successful negotiation had been destroyed. Theodore resented the imposition of conditions; the British government would not further humble itself by concessions. Theodore’s unwillingness to move may have stemmed from eccentricity and ignorance of the outside world, but an adequate explanation would have to include also an analysis of the political situation within Ethiopia. Domestic weakness, to which Merewether alluded,⁵⁷ made Theodore no less anxious about prestige than his British adversaries were. The im-

dell’ Imperatore Teodoro II di Etiopia,” *Annali d’Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* (1954-1955), 116.

⁵⁶ Rassam, *Narrative*, II, 326; Shepherd, *Campaign*, 253.

⁵⁷ Memo by Merewether, Sept. 25, 1866, *Correspondence, 1848-1868*, 508-510.

portant issue of foreign craftsmen, therefore, had to await the achievement of more stable conditions within Ethiopia and between Ethiopia and other states. The effective employment of foreigners was not achieved until over a generation later, in the reign of Menilek.

IX

A History of the Negotiations Concerning the Border between Ethiopia and British East Africa, 1897-1914

by

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THE NEGOTIATION OF THE TRIPARTITE TREATY of 1906 helped Great Britain to settle its conflicts with France and Italy regarding Ethiopia, but the delimitation of Ethiopia's southern border with British East Africa had to be settled through direct negotiations with Emperor Menilek. The history of this intricate border problem illustrates Ethiopia's consistent policy of border expansion: the method was to infiltrate areas which the British government considered to be within the boundaries of British East Africa, but which it was never able to control properly because of its own vacillating policy.¹

1

By July 1890, the German government had recognized British holdings as "coterminous with the territory reserved to the influence of Italy in Gallaland and Abyssinia."² Less than a year later Britain and Italy signed the protocol of March 24, 1891, which placed most of northern and central Ethiopia within the Italian sphere of influence. The same protocol stipulated: "The line of demarcation in East Africa, between the spheres of influence respectively reserved to Italy and Great Britain follows, from leaving the sea, the thalweg of the Juba River up to the 6th degree of north latitude . . . The line follows, thereupon, the 6th degree parallel of north latitude to the 35th degree meridian east of Greenwich, which it will follow up to the Blue Nile."³ Had Great Britain been able to implement these

¹ Archival materials used in this article were drawn from the microfilmed collection of Professor Sven Rubenson of Haile Sellassie I University. From the Foreign Office, the FO 1 file is composed of documents; the FO 401 and 403 files are made up of the Confidential Prints.

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² Governo Italiano, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, *Trattati* (Rome, 1906), I, 263.

³ *Ibid.*, 340. *Thalweg* is a term in international law which essentially means the middle point of a river, or any moving stream of water.

treaties, most of Sidamo-Borena, part of Gemmu Gofa, and a small but strategically important area of the southeastern Harrarghe Province would have been included in the British East African protectorate.

In a circular letter of April 1891 to the European powers, Emperor Menilek claimed his southern border as "following the Sobat River and including Arbore Gala . . . and extending to Lake Samberu [Lake Rudolf]; to the east it includes Boran Galla, Arussi, Ogaden, and stretches as far as the Somali border."⁴ This line, as the accompanying map shows, was to the south of that claimed by the British. But, because of its agreement with Italy and its assumption that Ethiopia would soon become an Italian colony, the British government paid no heed to the emperor's statement. Even after Ethiopia's victory at the Battle of Adwa, the region continued to be regarded by Britain as an Italian sphere of influence. A Foreign Office report of 1897 concluded that the southern frontier was "distinctly defined" by the Anglo-German Treaties of 1886 and 1890 and by the Anglo-Italian protocols;⁵ on this basis Rennell Rodd, who headed the first British diplomatic mission to Menilek in 1897, was instructed to leave the settlement of Ethiopia's southwestern and southern borders to Ethiopia and Italy.⁶

Menilek refused to acknowledge the Anglo-German and Anglo-Italian agreements. By the time Lieutenant-Colonel Wingate and Captain Gleichen, the two intelligence officers with the Rodd Mission, made their report, the emperor's forces were said to be within two hundred miles of Lado, within three hundred miles of British posts in Bunyoro, and within two hundred and fifty miles of the British protectorate of Buganda—"that is to say, effective Abyssinian occupation now extends far into the British sphere of influence as defined by the Anglo-German Agreement of the 1st July, 1890 . . . There would appear to be little doubt that the greater part of these countries [Boran Galla, Arussi as far as the Somali, and

⁴ For the English translation, see either April 1891, FO 403/155, or May 1897, FO 403/255. For the original Amharic version, see Menilek to Rodd, May 13, 1897, FO 1/32.

⁵ Notes on Abyssinia, n.d., FO 403/255.

⁶ Rodd's instructions, n.d., FO 1/32.

the Ogaden] are now, more or less, effectively occupied by the Abyssinians."⁷

At this time, however, the British government was deeply involved in other areas of Africa, and its prime concern in Ethiopia was the delimitation of the Sudan border. Thus, it hoped that a mission displaying the flag would be sufficient to reaffirm its claims to the northern part of the British East African protectorate. But the MacDonald Mission of 1899, designed in part for this purpose, failed to check "Abyssinian advances south of the Anglo-Italian delimitation frontier,"⁸ as Sir John Lane Harrington had hoped. Menilek was not put off by such feeble measures; single-mindedly he operated to fulfill his policy statement of 1891, and the opinion of a recent author suggests that for him, as well as for other Ethiopian dignitaries, to regain the traditional Ethiopian territories was a "sacred trust, which derived as much from racial pride as from legends of the first Menelek."⁹ From 1896 on, Menilek carried out his southern expansion by every means at his disposal. Ras Walda Giorgis conquered Kafa in October 1897,¹⁰ and by March 1898, accompanied by the Russian observer-cartographer, Bulatowitch, he succeeded in placing an Ethiopian flag at the mouth of the Omo on Lake Rudolf and in establishing several military posts on the northern part of the lake.¹¹ At about the same time, Fitaurari Habte Giorgis conquered the Boran Galla east of the Omo River.¹² This southern expansion of Ethiopia was to continue until 1913.¹³

⁷ Memo by Wingate and Gleichen, May 7, 1897, FO 403/255. Wingate later became Sirdar of the Sudan.

⁸ Memo of Harrington, July 22, 1898, FO 1/34. Sir John Lane Harrington was the first permanent British diplomatic official in Ethiopia. Before his assignment to Ethiopia, he had been an official in the government of India and had also seen service in British Somaliland.

⁹ Czeslaw J sman, *The Russians in Ethiopia, an Essay in Futility* (London, 1958), 69.

¹⁰ Docteur Merab, *Impressions d'Ethiopie* (Paris, 1921), I, 31, and memo by A. H. W. Beru, Dec. 3, 1897, FO 403/247.

¹¹ Conrad Keller, *Alfred Ilg: Sein Leben und Seine Werke* (Frauenfeld and Leipzig, 1918), 166.

¹² Keller claims that Menilek believed the MacDonald expedition was sent to occupy this territory and sent Habte Giorgis to forestall that possibility. Keller, *Ilg*, 166.

¹³ British records are full of reports of bands of Ethiopians pushing southwest and southeast. The following selection lists a few important ones:

In an attempt to consolidate his hold over the newly conquered southern areas, Menilek granted the so-called equatorial provinces of Ethiopia¹⁴ to "the only Russian buccaneer in the grand style in Africa at the end of the last century,"¹⁵ Dejjazmach Leontieff. Leontieff explained that he had been chosen governor because Menilek was impressed with the accomplishments in the Sudan of the various Europeans employed by the Khedives of Egypt. Since Menilek had previously done very well with Ethiopian officers, a more likely explanation of his choice lies in the fact that Leontieff's expedition included a fairly large number of Russians and Frenchmen, including Prince Henri d'Orleans, and Menilek probably felt that the British government, despite its fear that Leontieff, if successful, would push the line of effective Ethiopian occupation

Report by Mohammed bin Agil, in Crawford to Salisbury, July 10, 1899, FO 403/284; Abyssinian raiding parties in southern Borena.

Hardinge to Salisbury, May 6, 1900, FO 403/298; Ethiopian troops have occupied the following Borena settlements: Hego, Leim Arer, Dubullu, Egoilej, and Wajille.

Sir H. Johnston to Salisbury, May 26, 1900, FO 403/299; Ethiopians are raiding east of Lake Rudolf "far into British East Africa."

MacDougall to Sir C. Elliot, July 18, 1901, FO 403/313; Ethiopians have bridged the Juba River south of Lug, and 400 soldiers are permanently stationed near Lug.

Baird to Lansdowne, Aug. 19, 1902, FO 403/323; Ethiopians in the regions of lakes Rudolf and Marguerita are moving south to hunt for elephants.

Sub-Commissioner Hannington to Sir Charles Elliot, Nov. 3, 1903, FO 1/48; Ethiopians have arrived at Gedu within ten hours of Woher.

H. T. Kirkpatrick to Sir Charles Elliot, Dec. 18, 1903, *ibid.*; Ethiopians are close to Woher.

Sir D. Stuart to Lyttelton, Apr. 24, 1905, FO 401/8; 500 Ethiopians have arrived at the Webi Shebelli.

Sadler to Earl of Elgin, Jan. 8, 1906, FO 401/9; Ethiopians are building stations at Woher, El Wak, and Madowa.

Hervey to Grey, Nov. 7, 1908, FO 401/11; elephant hunters in large numbers are crossing the frontiers.

Only a few of these incursions were official. Evidence indicates that Menilek's policy of southern expansion was aided by the historic southward population movement which had already caused a shift in the Ethiopian power balance from the north toward the central and southern part of the country.

¹⁴ Harrington to Cromer, June 24, 1899, FO 403/284.

¹⁵ J sman, *Russians in Ethiopia*, 110; for the full story of Leontieff's activities in Ethiopia, see chap. 10.

farther south, would not take any decisive action that might involve it with France and Russia.¹⁶

That British fears were justified is shown by Leontieff's own words:

These provinces [the equatorial provinces] which extend between the 2nd and the 6th degree of north latitude¹⁷ were not under real control except for the northern part; all the other territories of Equatoria, even those within the sphere of influence claimed by Ethiopia, only nominally recognized the authority of the Negus . . . The first thing to do then was to occupy the country fully and to impose the authority of the Emperor both where it only existed nominally, and where it was ignored.¹⁸

Leontieff, however, did little actual damage to British pretensions in southern Ethiopia, beyond planting a few Ethiopian flags in place of British ones northeast of Lake Rudolf,¹⁹ an act that Menilek immediately disowned upon British protests.²⁰

British officials in Ethiopia had suspected that Menilek would use Leontieff as a catspaw and disavow him when necessary.²¹ But Harrington, the British minister in Addis Ababa, was nonetheless aware that the Ethiopians would continue their southward expansion until they came into contact with British outposts. It was clear to him that Menilek had every intention of occupying territory that had no visible owner, even though he would probably halt if he found signs of effective British occupation.²²

¹⁶ Monson to Salisbury, Feb. 21, 1898, FO 403/274; see also Harrington to Sanderson, June 1, 1900, FO 1/37. Sir Thomas Sanderson was then permanent under-secretary of state in the Foreign Office.

¹⁷ Italics added.

¹⁸ Count Dejjazmach Leontieff, "Exploration des Provinces Equatoriales d'Abyssinie," *La Géographie, Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (Jan. 15, 1900), 105-118.

¹⁹ Gerolimato to Sadler, Nov. 7, 1899, FO 403/284. Gerolimato was the British Consular Agent in Harrar.

²⁰ Harrington to Salisbury, Dec. 26, 1899, FO 403/297.

²¹ Harrington to Sanderson, June 1, 1900, FO 1/37.

²² Memo by Harrington, Feb. 17, 1900, FO 403/287. Nonofficial British observers also saw that only effective occupation of the disputed area would halt Menilek's southward expansion and preserve that part of the British sphere in East Africa. Captain M. S. Wellby, who toured southern Ethiopia in 1896, wrote that "in order to put a check on their [the Ethiopians'] raiding [the first step in the process of expansion], there is in my opinion, one speedy and ef-

In fact, important British officials such as Harrington and Cromer were aware that effective British occupation was the only way to stop Menilek. But, because of the tight-fisted policy of the British Treasury, it was impossible for the British East African authorities to make a start in that direction until 1910, and then the administration of the northern British East African border had to be of the least expensive and least thorough type. "They [the various border plans] all mean money and Chanc of the Exch. is not likely to let us have any for the purpose."²³ Indeed, cost was one of the reasons why the British turned down Menilek's first proposals to settle the southern border. Harrington personally felt that: "It is a pity to allow Menelek to extend his frontiers at our expense but the cost of the prevention of his doing so is, in my opinion, more than the value of what we should save."²⁴

2

In late May 1899, after the western border had in principle been settled,²⁵ Menilek said to Harrington, "now let us settle the other frontier." He had marked his idea of Ethiopia's frontier with British East Africa on a map. The line started at the Juba and, including the Ishing, Arbore Galla, and Turkana countries, ran to the southern shore of Lake Rudolf, placing that lake inside Ethiopia. When asked the basis for his claims, the emperor said he stood on his proclamation of 1891 and on the ground of effective occupation.

fective method, and that consists of fixing a frontier line around the Abyssinian dominion . . . I put forward this suggestion now, not from a political, but simply from a commonsense point of view." He stressed that the line must be effectively controlled and occupied. Augustus Wylde, traveling in Ethiopia during 1898 and 1899, told the British public that "if our rule . . . on the borders of Abyssinia is to be a success it . . . will necessitate small garrisons and therefore a moderate military expenditure." See M. S. Wellby, *Twixt Sirdar and Menelik* (London and New York, 1901), 334; and Augustus B. Wylde, *Modern Abyssinia* (London, 1901), 75.

²³ Memo by Sanderson, March 27, 1900, FO 1/44.

²⁴ Harrington to Sanderson, Feb. 17, 1900, *ibid.*

²⁵ For an account of the negotiations leading up to the settlement of the western border, see Harold G. Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations Concerning the Western Border with the Sudan," *Journal of African History*, IV, no. 1 (1963), 81-94.

Harrington told him, "it was impossible that my Government would accept the proposed line."²⁶

Menilek had apparently used this extreme position to test British reactions, because in early June 1899 he made a more serious proposal, as Harrington reported to Cramer:

following tribal limits when actual delimitation takes place, the frontier to start from the termination of the Soudan frontier, making a curve to the mouth of the small river which enters Lake Rudolph on the north, and west of the Omo River, the Turkana country to remain in the British sphere . . . On the southern side, starting from the junction of the Dawa River with the Kjuba River (Ganawa), the frontier being based on tribal limits, the Marehan to be in the British sphere, the Gere, Gabra, Sakayu, Sabo and Tertala tribes in the Ethiopian sphere. When the limits of the Tertala tribe are marked, the frontier to be a line running from the Tertala southern limits to Lake Rudolph, the Bur Kenedschi being in the British sphere.

Harrington, who had no instructions concerning the matter, accepted this proposal in principle, with the understanding that his action only bound him to support Menilek's suggestions and was not to be considered binding on the British government.²⁷ Harrington explained to higher officials that he had accepted Menilek's second proposal so quickly partly because, knowing how thoroughgoing the emperor's effective occupation was, "I recognised that a proposal on Menelek's part would put a limit to Abyssinian expansion, as he can scarcely now go beyond his proposed line, and partly because I dreaded his making use of Leontieff to occupy territory that we have not yet occupied."²⁸

The British government was, however, loath to accept Menilek's proposals, because they would have resulted in a serious loss of territory for British East Africa. On the other hand, it was just as reluctant to spend the money necessary to patrol the frontier. "Although the proposal made by Menelek is not satisfactory, we have no means at present of enforcing our claims by effective occupation of the territory."²⁹ Lord Cromer recommended "that Harrington should be authorised to state that further communication will be

²⁶ Harrington to Cromer, May 26, 1899, FO 403/284.

²⁷ Harrington to Cromer, June 3, 1899, *ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Salisbury to Cromer, Oct. 18, 1899, FO 403/284.

made on the subject, while avoiding pledging himself to any particular. It is always to be apprehended that the Abyssinians will continue to advance southwards, if nothing is said. If, however, he can manage to bring Menelek to put forward fresh suggestions of a more advantageous nature than those he made before, he might take note of them and report them." Salisbury agreed to this plan.³⁰ So the man on the spot was overruled, and the British government by its indecision continued to play Menilek's game for him: while the British government awaited better proposals from Menilek, he was ensuring that no better proposals would be necessary. His expansion could continue practically unhindered, and with official and unofficial Ethiopian raiding parties nibbling at British East Africa, the border he desired was ultimately attained.³¹

In early 1900, Harrington again reported that "the expansion of [Menilek's] Empire will continue . . . until country is reached where there are visible signs of our authority." For the British government to push claims in areas where it could display none of these "visible signs" would, Harrington continued, "incur a serious risk of war . . . I think it possible [Menilek] may be forced by his Chiefs to fight if we press him too much . . . The Abyssinian Chiefs who rule the southern districts are so powerful that I doubt [Menilek's] daring to curtail their provinces beyond a certain point."³² Caught in this double dilemma, the British government was unable to act.

In June 1900, Menilek made new proposals: "Following tribal limits . . . the line runs south to the Dawa River, then west to Lake Stephanie, so that the Karayu and Wadditu tribes remain Abyssinian. The Tortola [Tertala], if they should prove to be a district sub-tribe of the Boran-Galla, remain British, but, if they are in reality a sub-tribe of the Karayu or Wadditu, they are Ethiopians. West of Lake Rudolph the frontier will follow the River Maurizio Sacchi." Harrington told Salisbury: "I incline to the opinion that these proposals represent the maximum that the Emperor will yield

³⁰ Cromer to Salisbury, Oct. 20, 1899, and Salisbury to Cromer, Oct. 20, 1899; *ibid* (telegrams).

³¹ For example, in late 1899 the Ethiopians had not yet established an effective claim to the Sakuyu, Gara, Karayou, and Tertala countries, whereas by 1903 these areas were occupied. See memo by Jenner, Nov. 1, 1899, FO 1/44.

³² Memo by Harrington, Feb. 18, 1900, FO 403/297.

willingly, and I humbly venture to suggest that they are worthy of serious consideration by your Lordship." The longer the British delay, "the more likely we are to find an extension of Abyssinian influence."³³ But still nothing was done.

In 1901 there were numerous complaints about Ethiopian raiding in British East Africa: "Until some sign of our authority, however small, exists in the northern portion of our B. E. African Protectorate, it is hopeless trying to prevent Abyssinian raids and . . . when a raid takes place it is a waste of breath complaining."³⁴ By mid-July 1901, it was reported that the Ethiopians had bridged the Juba south of Lug, an important communication and commercial center, permanently stationed troops near that town, and "are masters of the situation there at present, and the Boran country [is] virtually annexed."³⁵

Finally, in 1902 the British government decided to act, but again only in a half-hearted way. It enlisted a private citizen, W. Butter, a sportsman and adventurer, to make a surveying trip to the southern border at his own expense, and to "place his work at our disposal without any conditions attached to it."³⁶ Butter was instructed as follows: "The object of your expedition is to place in my hands sufficient information to enable me to arrange with the Emperor Menelek a frontier between Abyssinia and British East Africa." He was to recommend a line that followed natural features, did not interfere with local tribes, and took into consideration Menilek's previous proposals as agreed to by Harrington. Furthermore, Butter was to instruct Captain Maud, the official British surveyor accompanying the expedition, to map the location of Ethiopian outposts, the extreme limits of Ethiopian occupation, and the area in which Ethiopian raiding parties roamed: "Permanent occupation should be carefully differentiated from raiding parties."³⁷ To obtain Menilek's permission for the Butter expedition, Harrington told the emperor that, before renewing negotiations, the British government needed a more thorough knowledge of the southern border area.³⁸

³³ Harrington to Salisbury, June 19, 1900, FO 403/299.

³⁴ Harrington to Hill, Aug. 24, 1901, FO 1/45.

³⁵ Commissioner MacDougall to Elliot, July 18, 1901, FO 403/313.

³⁶ Rodd to Sanderson, March 21, 1902, FO 1/46.

³⁷ Butter's instructions from Harrington, n.d., FO 403/323.

³⁸ Harrington to Boyle, May 3, 1902, FO 1/46.

Menilek, probably feeling that British findings could only lend support to his claims, gave his consent to the expedition, which left Addis Ababa for southern Ethiopia on November 6, 1902.

According to regular reports he was receiving from the expedition, Harrington could already report in March 1903, that "matters in our so-called sphere of influence are even worse than I expected. Abyssinian influence extends . . . as far south as 3°30'N."³⁹ Shortly afterward, knowing that word would get back to Harrington, Menilek told the Italian minister that he had been "forced" to agree to the western border, but that Great Britain "should find greater difficulty in coming to an agreement about this border." Furthermore, he told Captain Ciccodicola that he had no intention of giving Liban-Boren to England.⁴⁰

Letters from the Butter expedition gave good evidence of Menilek's sizable claims. The expedition members were amazed by the extent and effectiveness of Ethiopian occupation. The Galla population evidently feared the Ethiopians and had been warned by Menilek's officers "that Abyssinia would not yield a foot of Borena without fighting and that the Abyssinians were more than a match for the British if it came to blows." The expedition did find, however, that this control extended only as far as 3°30'N, 38°48'E, and that even raiding was rare below 3°30'N. "However, [the Ethiopians] look on the country as undoubtedly theirs and will continue to do so until we occupy a line beyond which they may not pass."⁴¹ "The border proposals made by the Butter expedition offered a clear frontier defined for most of its length by physical features. It starts with the River Dawa on the East . . . further west, the line follows an escarpment, leaving the highlands to the Abyssinians and the plains to us. At the base of the escarpment is a strip of unhealthy neutral zone."⁴² It was further suggested that the proposal was based on the principles of dividing the high country from the low and separating the Boran Galla from the non-Galla population.⁴³

³⁹ Harrington to Sanderson, March 3, 1903, FO 1/47.

⁴⁰ Notes by Baird, Aug. 22, 1903, *ibid.* J. Baird was a British diplomatic agent in Ethiopia during Harrington's tenure in office as British plenipotentiary.

⁴¹ Précis of letters from Butter and Baird, n.d., *ibid.*; and Maud's report on the Butter expedition, Sept. 4, 1903, FO 403/334.

⁴² Elliot to Lansdowne, July 17, 1903, FO 1/47.

⁴³ Memo by Baird, n.d., *ibid.*

Maud stated that his proposals were based on the principle of effective occupation and that "the country of which the Abyssinians may be said to be in occupation goes to Ethiopia." This included the Boran of Liban, Dirri, Tertala, N.W. Golbo, Arbore, and the Hummur Hills, and the peoples of Gubbra Migo and Gubbra Algan. "Country in which the Abyssinians have only raided becomes British East Africa," including the following: Gurre, Murrehum-Somali, Baludda, Idur, Sakuyu, Ajuran, Boran and Gabbra of Golbo (That portion south of the escarp), Lokob, Summander, Korro, and Rendile.⁴⁴ Maud said, however, that he was "convinced that whatever frontier may be agreed upon with the Emperor Menelek, unless it were held by our posts, it would not be respected by his very independent officers who rule the Boran country."⁴⁵

In London the War Office Intelligence Division reported to the Foreign Office that: "Captain Maud's frontier involves the surrender to the Abyssinians of all the country of which they may be said to be in occupation at the present time. Should it be successful as a barrier to prevent them from pressing further south, the sacrifice of territory to which the British Government has claims would be worth the advantage gained."⁴⁶ From Addis Ababa, George Clerk, the British chargé d'affaires, reported that, although Menilek had given orders that no further southward movements should be made until the frontier had been determined, "the southern chiefs are aware that the Emperor is better pleased by their disobeying than by their observing his orders." While Menilek would disavow such encroachments, "he feels that the more territory he can show to be in actual Abyssinian occupation the stronger will his position be when the frontier comes to be discussed here."⁴⁷

Meanwhile, having heard of the Butter expedition and anxious to ensure its own interests in Ethiopia, the Italian government, according to Rodd, asked that if

there should be ultimately a modification of the line laid down by the Anglo-Italian Protocol of the 24th March, 1891, that we [the British] should, before actually negotiating the frontier with Menelek, refer to

⁴⁴ Maud's report, Sept. 4, 1903, FO 403/334.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Intelligence Division to FO, Dec. 8, 1903, FO 403/334.

⁴⁷ Clerk to Lansdowne, Dec. 5, 1903, *ibid.*

them . . . the proposed modifications and obtain *pro forma* their consent to any changes in the line of the Protocol which may be contemplated.

For "the future might bring considerable changes in Ethiopia; circumstances might arise conceivably in which Abyssinia would have to contract her borders, and Italy would wish to keep an open road for expansion westwards north of the Juba." The Italians, Rodd continued, accordingly wanted the area between the Benadir Coast and Abyssinia reserved for their possible occupation, and furthermore they wanted Great Britain to help them in their diplomatic struggle for Lug.⁴⁸ Harrington, who tended to view British imperial policy only insofar as it related directly to Ethiopia, said bitterly: "I cannot see [by] what right the Italians can claim to interfere with any frontier we choose to make with Abyssinia . . . The sooner the farce of regarding Abyssinia as an Italian sphere of influence is knocked on the head, the better, as all agreements we have made with Italy in this part of the world have considerably hampered our negotiations with Abyssinia."⁴⁹ Lord Lansdowne, however, saw the value of retaining Italian support for England in Ethiopia and in the Middle East, and instructed Rodd to inform the Italian government: "In negotiations for the settlement of this frontier, His Majesty's Government have every desire to work in accord with the Government of Italy, and to make no arrangements that would be prejudicial to Italian interests." Also, before making any modifications in the border, England would seek Italy's concurrence.⁵⁰

In December 1903, Lansdowne informed Harrington: "The line appears to . . . [His Majesty's Government] to form a reasonable compromise between the claims of Great Britain and Abyssinia in the regions in question, and they are prepared to enter into negotiations with the Emperor Menelek on this basis." Because the Butter line left the area between the Rivers Ganale and Dawa free from any claim by the British government, Lansdowne did not

⁴⁸ Rodd to Lansdowne, Jan. 1, 1903, *ibid.* For a brief discussion of the development of the Lug controversy, see Luca dei Sabelli, *Storia di Abissinia* (Rome, 1938), III, 92ff.

⁴⁹ Harrington to Sanderson, Jan. 17, 1903, FO 1/47. For a description of the difficulties Great Britain had with Italy over the western border, see Marcus, "Ethio-British Negotiations."

⁵⁰ Lansdowne to Rodd, Jan. 23, 1903, FO 403/334.

foresee any difficulty with the Italians.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the matter needed their approval, and Harrington was instructed to put the matter before them on his way back to England. Giacomo Agnesa, the head of the colonial department of the Italian Foreign Office, Rennell Rodd, and John Harrington met in Rome in early December 1903, to discuss a wide range of issues regarding Ethiopia—it rapidly became clear that Italy was seeking economic domination in the Italian Somaliland hinterland. The British delegates promised only freedom of trade on all routes crossing British East Africa from the Boran country to Lug, and Agnesa, though not fully satisfied, agreed to support the proposed border changes if Great Britain would help Italy to obtain Lug.⁵²

When Harrington returned to Addis Ababa, he carried with him instructions to begin final negotiations about the southern border. He was to base them on the Maud-Butter line, and he was to be sure not to enter into any agreement “prejudicial to Italian interests in those regions” or to agree to any alteration in the line of March 24, 1891, without first gaining the concurrence of the Italian government.⁵³

3

A year later Harrington reported that the border negotiations were not progressing well. Menilek claimed that the Girrhi, previously considered British subjects, were in fact of Galla origin. Moreover, he was pressing for a border along a 2° N line.⁵⁴ Meanwhile, raiding continued unabated, although Harrington reported that it was difficult to obtain accurate news of such raids, since local informants were afraid to corroborate official reports. In June and August 1905, he had received word from Uganda of raids in the unadministered northern tracts of the protectorate.⁵⁵ In final desperation he recommended the employment of a traveling border inspector who would, he felt, prevent serious raiding.⁵⁶ The Colonial

⁵¹ Lansdowne to Harrington, Dec. 7, 1903, FO 1/48.

⁵² Memo by Harrington and Rodd, n.d., memo by British delegates, n.d., declaration of Agnesa, Harrington, and Rodd, Dec. 19, 1903; FO 403/334.

⁵³ Lansdowne to Harrington, April 1, 1904, FO 403/346.

⁵⁴ Harrington to Lansdowne, April 1, 1905, FO 401/8.

⁵⁵ Report of Fowler, June 1905, and report of Sadler, Aug. 1905; *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Harrington to Lansdowne, Oct. 10, 1905, *ibid.*

Office approved this plan and agreed to charge expenses for the post, around £1200 per annum, to the British East African protectorate.⁵⁷ In November 1905, Zaphiro, a Greek subject, was appointed by Harrington to travel as inspector along the southern frontier, to patrol the Butter-Maud line, and to turn back Ethiopian raiding parties from British territory.⁵⁸

Although Zaphiro could never hinder the movements of individuals or of small groups, he was successful in stopping the southward incursions of large groups of Ethiopians,⁵⁹ thus finally stabilizing the border region.⁶⁰ This meant the end of Ethiopia's active southern expansion, and on December 7, 1906, Menilek and Harrington agreed to a frontier line.⁶¹ Harrington now left Ethiopia for consultations in London, where he told the British government:

it has taken nearly eight years hard fighting to get this frontier, and no time should be lost in sending Mr. Clerk telegraphic instructions to sign, as any delay will probably mean we may not get the frontier settled for a year or two more . . . The frontier is anything but acceptable to the Abyssinian chiefs in the south, they have lost good raiding grounds, and every influence has been brought to bear on Menelek to get him to hold out for a frontier at El Wak and Wujjers . . . In my opinion, we have been a great deal luckier than I ever thought we should be over this border.⁶²

With reservations the Colonial Office approved the draft of the agreement, and Clerk was authorized to sign it.⁶³ But it took until December before the Southern Border Agreement was finally completed and signed by all parties.⁶⁴

The negotiations of the intervening eleven months are too intricate and picayune to warrant discussion. Suffice it to say that, while Menilek and his advisers wanted more territory, the British tried to hold them to the Butter-Maud line or even to diminish the Ethio-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Clerk to Grey, May 20, 1907, FO 401/10.

⁵⁹ See footnote 12 above.

⁶⁰ Résumé of Zaphiro's reports, FO 401/10.

⁶¹ Clerk to Grey, Jan. 10, 1907, *ibid.*

⁶² Minute by Harrington, Jan. 18, 1907, *ibid.*

⁶³ Colonial Office to Foreign Office, Jan. 21, 1907, and Grey to Clerk, Jan. 21, 1907; *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Hohler to Grey, Dec. 24, 1907, *ibid.*

pian holdings. After much wrangling, the British succeeded in keeping the border at the line set by Harrington and Menilek in the previous December.

The final agreement called for a line which,

starting from the junction of the River Dawa with the River Canale, follows the thalweg of the River Dawa to Ursulli, and from that point follows the tribal limits between the Curre and the Borana to Gebel Kuffole; from Gebel Kuffole the line passes through Moyale, Burrole, El Dimtu, Furroli, Dugga Kakulla, Burrchuma, Afur. From there the line goes to the creek at the south end of Lake Stefanie, thence due west to Lake Rudolph, thence northwest across Lake Rudolph to the point of the peninsula east of Sanderson Gulf, thence along the western shore of that peninsula to the mouth, or marshes at the mouth, of the River Kibish [River Sacchi], thence along the thalweg of the river to latitude 5°25' north; from there due west to a point 30°15' longitude east of Greenwich, thence the line follows this degree of longitude to its intersection with latitude 5°40' north and runs from there to the intersection of the 6° north latitude with the 35° of longitude east of Greenwich.

Tribes on both sides of the line were given "the right to use the grazing grounds on the other side as in the past," and free access to wells was guaranteed. The agreement further stipulated that "both governments shall send commissioners, who shall by concert delimit the exact line of the frontier."⁶⁵ Menilek told Thomas Hohler, the British chargé d'affaires, that he was content that "the Agreement should remain in its present irregular form. He [Menilek] wishes to put it in the ordinary form of a Treaty when the Commissioners shall have finished their labours, and he expressed the desire that they might commence them with the least possible delay."⁶⁶

As their chief commissioner the British assigned Major Gwynn, who had already delimited the Sudan-Ethiopia border.⁶⁷ But Ethiopia assigned no one, since Menilek was incapacitated by illness and the Council of Ministers was unwilling to take the responsibility.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Treaty of Dec. 6, 1907, FO 401/11.

⁶⁶ Hohler to Grey, Jan. 1, 1908, *ibid.*

⁶⁷ CO to FO, April 9, 1908, and Grey to Harrington, April 10, 1908; *ibid.*

⁶⁸ Hervey to Grey, n.d., *ibid.* Menilek's serious illness and ultimate paralysis threw the Ethiopian government into a state of chaos, and government officials became unwilling to make decisions regarding internal or foreign policy, lest Menilek's successor later accuse them of betraying their country.

Since the delimitation expedition had to leave Addis Ababa in October in order to finish its work before the beginning of the long rains in late June, it was suggested that Major Gwynn should start immediately and meet the Ethiopian commissioners at Dolo and Ursulli in mid-December. The British government agreed to this plan,⁶⁹ but Lord Hervey, the British chargé d'affaires in Addis Ababa, reported that the Ethiopian government seemed to be taking no action.⁷⁰ Hervey interpreted this inaction to mean that Ethiopia would be willing to abide by the British commissioners' decisions.⁷¹

In the meantime Hervey wrote: "Owing to the protracted illness of the Emperor Menelek, and the consequent loosening of his grip on the outlying portion of his domains, a state of lawlessness exists on the southern frontier unparalleled in recent years."⁷² He recommended that, "Given the apathetic attitude of the Abyssinian authorities, the only satisfactory solution of the question is the prompt establishment of a force under our control sufficiently strong to turn back any ordinary-sized bands found crossing the line."⁷³ Major Gwynn also realized that only effective patrolling would stop the encroachment of Ethiopians into British East Africa, and therefore he suggested a number of border changes to make the frontier more easily defensible by moving the previously arranged line around Moyale slightly farther north. This arrangement would provide Great Britain with the wells at Churre Moyale and Fort Harrington, thus permitting continuous patrolling and communication along the border.⁷⁴ In compensation, the wells of Chillanko and

There followed a breakdown of order and government generally, extending to the border areas and seriously taxing relations between Ethiopia and its neighbors. For further information, see Harold G. Marcus, "The Last Years of the Reign of the Emperor Menelik II, 1906-1913," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX, no. 2 (1964), 229-234.

⁶⁹ Hervey to Grey, n.d., and Grey to Hervey, Oct. 16, 1908; FO 401/11.

⁷⁰ Hervey to Grey, Oct. 29, 1908, *ibid.*

⁷¹ Hervey to Grey, Dec. 5, 1908, *ibid.*

⁷² Hervey to Grey, Oct. 30, 1908, and Nov. 7, 1908, *ibid.*

⁷³ Reports of Zaphiro, Aug. 23, 1908, and Oct. 2, 1908, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Gwynn explained that Zaphiro had, for administrative purposes, "latterly" claimed a number of wells which the Agreement of 1907 had placed inside Ethiopia. Local Ethiopian officers had not disputed this action. These were the wells which Major Gwynn now placed inside Kenya, since they were "absolutely necessary" for maintenance of administration: "The Treaty [agreement

a large piece of territory in that area would be placed within the Ethiopian boundary.⁷⁵ When reports of Gwynn's alterations reached him, Menilek "is said to have informed Fitaurari Habte Giorgis [the minister of war] that he would not consent to them,"⁷⁶ since the loss of the wells around the border region would also mean the surrender of a sizable taxable population of Borans, whom Menilek had always considered Ethiopians. Furthermore, if Great Britain needed the wells to control the border, Ethiopia needed them to control its Boran population.⁷⁷ In March 1909, the Council of Ministers sent a German named Schubert as their border commissioner and then, apparently not trusting him, an all-Ethiopian commission.⁷⁸

Before Major Gwynn left Ethiopia in May 1909, he explained his changes to Fitaurari Habte Giorgis and Naggadras Haile Giorgis, the foreign minister, and said that any future border dispute would be the fault of the Ethiopian government, which had not had its commissioners ready in time. The two Ethiopians said only that they would compare Gwynn's border with the conclusions reached by their own commission.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, Britain continued to occupy Churre Moyale and Fort Harrington, and Hervey was instructed not to enter into any discussion of the issue until Gwynn's report and maps were finished. If the Ethiopian government should complain,

of 1907] excluded almost all the permanent water supplies from British territory. To the east of Churre Moyale there is no permanent water near the frontier for about 100 miles, and to the west for about 130 miles. Accordingly it was necessary either to regularise or abandon Mr. Zaphiro's claims." Gwynn decided to "regularise" them and adopted the view that "The natural features named in the Treaty were merely used for the identification of the line, and not as hard and fast points to which it was necessary to adhere." He felt that he could balance concessions and was free, within reasonable limits, to introduce modifications where necessary to secure a workable frontier; "a frontier which could not be administered would have been unworkable." Gwynn to FO, July 27, 1909, FO 401/13.

⁷⁵ Gwynn to Hervey, Jan. 27, 1909, FO 401/12.

⁷⁶ Hervey to Grey, March 20, 1909, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ Thesiger to Sir P. Girouard, Nov. 9, 1910, FO 403/320. Girouard was governor of Kenya and Wilfred Thesiger was British minister after Harrington had retired.

⁷⁸ Hervey to Grey, April 17, 1909, FO 401/12.

⁷⁹ Hervey to Grey, April 28, 1909, *ibid.*

he was to reiterate that the fault was its own because it had not sent commissioners to accompany Gwynn "in accordance with the recognised arrangement."⁸⁰

The Ethiopian government continued to reject the Gwynn line; but on January 31, 1910, Thesiger met with several high Ethiopian officials, and they agreed that "until the question of Major Gwynn's line was settled matters should remain as they were"—Britain was thus granted the *de facto* right to hold the appropriated wells pending final settlement. Plans were underway to create an administration for the northern frontier district of Kenya; "to make the frontier into a practically independent district, with the boundaries already mentioned [the Gwynn line] communicating directly both with Nairobi and Adis Ababa"; and to garrison the border with one hundred and twenty soldiers commanded by a British officer assisted by Zaphiro.⁸¹ After Thesiger had informed the Ethiopian government of these plans, he reported that the Ethiopians were uneasy about them, since they felt that the placement of British regular troops along the border implied an intention of altering the frontier by force. Thesiger wrote that he hoped he had lessened these fears by explaining that Ethiopia would always be consulted before Britain took any action affecting the border, and, "should any debatable points arise, we should do our best to settle them between us in a temporary and friendly manner pending the final decision."⁸²

A month later Grey authorized Thesiger to reopen the frontier negotiations at any time that appeared suitable; speed was no longer a factor now that Britain was taking steps to protect its side of the border. The negotiations were to be carried out on the basis of the Gwynn line, which Grey regarded as fair to Ethiopia and "of administrative necessity" to Great Britain.⁸³ Thus the British position was fairly well established before the reopening of the discussions on July 23 at a meeting of the ministers, chaired by Fitaurari Habte Giorgis. If the British position appeared firm, the Ethiopian policy was "intractable." The ministers asked for removal of Gwynn's

⁸⁰ Grey to Hervey, July 22, 1909, FO 401/13.

⁸¹ Memo by Capt. Barret, n.d., FO 401/14.

⁸² Thesiger to Grey, Feb. 4, 1910, *ibid.*

⁸³ Grey to Thesiger, March 8, 1910, *ibid.*

border beacons, accused Britain of annexing a large portion of territory without discussion, and demanded that a joint commission delimit the border, as provided in the Agreement of 1907. "Under these conditions all discussion was impossible, and the whole morning was wasted in attempting to show that the removal of the beacons could not be allowed and that they themselves were entirely to blame for not having sent their commission as agreed upon." Another meeting was set, at which time Thesiger hoped to persuade the Ethiopian government to accept the Gwynn line, "at least as a basis of discussion—a thing which they absolutely refuse to do at present."⁸⁴

At the second meeting on August 1, the general tone was "more reasonable, but still far from satisfactory." The Ethiopian government contended that the old Maud-Butter line had taken away a large amount of territory from the Ethiopian Boran tribes, and it had hoped that the delimitation would return this; instead, "they found that the new line absorbed still more of their territory." Thesiger continued to insist that Gwynn's line be used as a basis for discussion, especially since he knew that the Ethiopian government could not control the movement of hunters and soldiers near its border.⁸⁵

The fact that the Abyssinian Government cannot control their frontier is our strongest argument, and I have given them to understand that, although I am anxious to settle this matter on a friendly basis, if they persist in refusing their consent [to Gwynn's line], and in raiding our territory, there will be nothing left but to take strong measures, as a continuance of the present state of affairs is bound sooner or later to cause serious complications.⁸⁶

During an interview between Thesiger and Habte Giorgis, the latter surprisingly "acknowledged that they had practically no control over the Lake Rudolph tribes, and that it was difficult to keep the hunters in hand." Thesiger took this opportunity to stress the "absolute necessity" of accepting Gwynn's line, since it would create an easily controllable border, and again warned that continued raiding would ultimately tax the good relations between

⁸⁴ Thesiger to Grey, July 28, 1910, FO 401/15.

⁸⁵ Thesiger to Grey, Aug. 4, 1910, *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Thesiger to Hope, Aug. 31, 1910, *ibid.*

Great Britain and Ethiopia.⁸⁷ When in mid-October the Ethiopian government still refused to discuss the Gwynn line, Thesiger suggested that Britain, after the next raid, ought to occupy Gwynn's line completely so that patrolling could be made effective. The Ethiopian government would be forced to take the matter more seriously: "we must . . . be prepared . . . to take a strong line, and I am convinced that to do so after due warning will enhance our prestige here, and will not lead to any serious complications."⁸⁸

On November 26, 1910, the Council of Ministers again insisted that they need not accept the Gwynn line because the delimitation commission had not included an Ethiopian. Thesiger regarded this view as totally negative and wrote: "It is impossible to discuss any question with the present Government, each member of which is intensely afraid of accepting any responsibility, and dares not give any opinion lest he should be accused of betraying the interests of his country." He again suggested an "energetic policy" to show the Ethiopian government how seriously His Majesty's Government considered the problem.⁸⁹ He then reiterated his earlier position in a letter to Ras Tasamma, the regent:

The events of the past four years have shown that the Abyssinian Government cannot prevent their hunters, soldiers, and tribes from raiding our territory, and it is therefore absolutely essential that the line should be so altered as to give us certain wells which will enable us to patrol the whole frontier, and, in conjunction with the Abyssinian frontier police, to stop . . . raids, which must otherwise lead to disputes between the two countries, which we should both regret.⁹⁰

Tasamma answered, according to Thesiger, that he dared not make any further concessions to the British, particularly since many Ethiopians already considered the 1907 agreement to be unjust. "He was not Menelik, and if as Regent he consented to give us what we required, his position, which, as I must know, was at the present moment not of the strongest, would be much weakened, and he would certainly be accused of having sold his country." The Ras then suggested, Thesiger continued, that he would consider the

⁸⁷ Thesiger to Grey, Sept. 1, 1910, *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Thesiger to Grey, Oct. 18, 1910, *ibid.*

⁸⁹ Thesiger to Grey, Nov. 27, 1910, *ibid.*

⁹⁰ Thesiger to Ras Tasamma, Nov. 28, 1910, *ibid.*

port of Zeila sufficient compensation for the necessary changes along the southern border, and even for some along the western border.⁹¹ Although in 1909 and 1910 the Somali protectorate government had made several serious moves to withdraw its administration from all but the coastal areas,⁹² the Foreign Office refused to consider any cession of land in the protectorate. On the other hand, Grey admitted: "There would appear to be little or no hope for Mr. Thesiger being able to obtain the voluntary recognition by the Abyssinian Government of Major Gwynn's line as the true frontier. Moreover, the internal political condition of the country is precarious, and . . . it would not be advisable to alienate the Shoan party or other influential rulers in Southern Abyssinia by an aggressive frontier policy." Accordingly, Thesiger was instructed to let the situation remain as it was, pending further negotiations and so long as there was no serious raiding.⁹³

In late February Thesiger informed the Council of Ministers that His Majesty's Government consented to postpone further discussion of the southern frontier until the Ethiopian political situation had eased, provided that there was no serious raiding; in the meantime British frontier officials would continue to maintain their present position. He wrote: "While relieved that further discussion on this question was postponed, they expressed considerable indignation that I should have declared that under any circumstance we should occupy the line without their consent, which meant to say that if they would not agree to the new frontier we should take it by force, and that it was unjust to punish the country for the acts of a few robbers whom they could not control." Thesiger insisted that all raiding was the Ethiopian government's responsibility and that the British government was tired of ineffectual steps. He felt this statement had made a strong enough impression on the council: "for some time to come the Abyssinian Government will prevent any serious raids, and this period could be utilised to establish ourselves firmly from the administrative and commercial point of view."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Thesiger to Grey, Dec. 9, 1910, *ibid.*

⁹² Thesiger to Grey, March 31, 1910, FO 401/14; FO to CO, May 5, 1910, *ibid.*; Manning to Earl of Crewe, June 2, 1910, FO 401/15.

⁹³ FO to CO, Jan. 12, 1911, FO 403/420.

⁹⁴ Thesiger to Grey, March 3, 1911, *ibid.*

The border problem was allowed to rest for a few months, but in May 1911, the Ethiopian government, in an attempt to improve its position, tried to lay claim by occupation to an area north of Lake Rudolf which, according to the agreement of 1907, was to be British. The governor of this frontier territory, Dejjaz Berru, stated that all Turkana and Dodosi were Ethiopian "and had been held and taxed by his predecessor . . . Therefore accusations of raiding [in his area] fell to the ground, for the country mentioned was his." Thesiger replied that the territory was British and that the Dodosi were ten days' journey from the Ethiopian side of the border. The Ethiopians held stubbornly to their view that they "had certainly held both Turkhana and Dodosi; . . . that no one knew where the . . . line on the map was on the ground; that the country had never been British; . . . that there were no British officers ever seen there; and that Abyssinia could not give up country which she had held without dispute for fifteen years." The Ethiopians, wrote Doughty-Wylie, hoped to legitimize their claim by requesting that "no taxes be collected in the countries in question by the British pending an agreement,"⁹⁵ but Thesiger entirely rejected their claims: "I cannot listen to any claim put forward by the Abyssinian Government to administer even the smallest part of it or to tax any single native living there."⁹⁶

In the summer of 1911, Thesiger, in London on home leave, recommended that the authorities of the British East African protectorate should steadily patrol the country in the neighborhood of the Gwynn line and arrest all raiders; if this could be done, he felt that "the Abyssinians would, in all probability themselves ask for a definite settlement of the frontier at no very distant date."⁹⁷ But even a request by the Colonial Office that the authorities in Uganda survey the Ethiopia-Uganda border was refused, because

⁹⁵ Doughty-Wylie to Grey, May 6, 1911, *ibid.* In this dispatch, Doughty-Wylie, the second officer of the British legation during Thesiger's tenure of office, reports what happened at a recent meeting between the council and Thesiger.

⁹⁶ Thesiger to Minister of Foreign Affairs, May 5, 1911, *ibid.*

⁹⁷ FO to CO, July 17, 1911, FO 403/421.

the director of surveys in Entebbe could not spare a surveyor.⁹⁸ For some reason, however, the general position along the southern border "greatly improved as the continual raids which took place at such frequent intervals during the year 1910 . . . completely ceased." The Ethiopian government, moreover, continued its *de facto* recognition of Moyale and Fort Harrington as British territory,⁹⁹ a concession that allowed the British government to carry out its plans for the administration of the frontier district.

The situation remained relatively quiet until mid-1913, when Ethiopian troops crossed the border to follow a large number of Boran Galla who had crossed to the British side.¹⁰⁰ The district commissioner at Moyale felt that the situation would be alleviated only if the Boran could be persuaded to return to Ethiopia;¹⁰¹ but the British government, apparently regarding the time ripe to make a stand, instructed the governor of British East Africa to allow the Boran to remain within his territory. Thesiger was instructed to be firm in the face of any Ethiopian complaints and to protest loudly if the raiding continued, as Grey thought likely.¹⁰² The situation was aggravated when Captain Aylmer, a British frontier inspector, was killed by Ethiopian hunters about eighty miles east of Moyale.¹⁰³

Grey apparently hoped that these incidents would force the Ethiopian government to concede Gwynn's border rectification. When Thesiger met with the Council of Ministers in June 1913, he told them that the British government now considered it

absolutely necessary, for the prevention of such incidents in the future, that a rectification of the frontier should be made which would give . . . [Great Britain] permanent water . . . so that we could patrol our side of the line effectively . . . that it was only out of consideration for the weakness of the Ethiopian Government that His Majesty's had been so patient in the face of continued provocation both on the western and southern

⁹⁸ Memo by Allen, Sept. 15, 1911, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Annual Report on the situation in Abyssinia for the year 1911, by Thesiger, April 22, 1912, FO 403/429.

¹⁰⁰ Governor of East African Protectorate to Harcourt, May 21, 1913, FO 403/438.

¹⁰¹ D.C., Moyale to Chief Secretary, Nairobi, May 1, 1913, *ibid.*

¹⁰² Grey to Thesiger, July 3, 1913, FO 402/439.

¹⁰³ Enquiry into death of Capt. Aylmer, n.d., *ibid.*

frontiers, and that . . . they were now forced in self-defence to insist on the acceptance of the above measures.¹⁰⁴

The Ethiopian government played for time and, when the situation still did not improve, Thesiger asked for instructions to present the Ethiopians with "a definite demand" for a frontier change, "giving them [the Ministers] clearly to understand that a refusal to meet our wishes will mean the breaking-off of relations between the two countries with all the consequences which may ensue."¹⁰⁵ The British government, however, drew back, cautioning: "If by breaking off relations you mean merely to remain at Adis Ababa but to hold no official communications with the Abyssinian Government until they agree to your terms, you may use this threat, but there can be no question of your leaving Adis Ababa or of committing His Majesty's Government to any use of force such as a military expedition."¹⁰⁶ Thesiger accordingly met with the Council of Ministers, presumably in a more conciliatory fashion. They continued to equivocate, stating that "it was out of the question for the Council, as it now stood, to give a definite answer on such an important question," and requesting postponement of the discussion until after the rains in mid-October, when the council could meet under the presidency of Lij Iyyasu, the crown prince. Thesiger pointed out that only a small amount of territory was under discussion and that the wells at Chillanko seemed adequate compensation. When the council remained adamant,¹⁰⁷ the British government moved to reinforce the garrison at Moyale.¹⁰⁸

In mid-November the Council of Ministers under Lij Iyyasu finally discussed the southern border problem and concluded that "the red line [of 1907] had been recognised by the Emperor Menelek and could not be altered during his lifetime without his consent." It apparently made no difference that Menilek was totally incapacitated, or that Lij Iyyasu and the Council of Ministers represented the only Ethiopian government. The one remaining solution

¹⁰⁴ Thesiger to Grey, June 19, 1913, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Thesiger to Grey, June 27, 1913, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Grey to Thesiger, July 26, 1913, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Thesiger to Grey, July 31, 1913, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ CO to FO, Oct. 8, 1913, *ibid.*

to the problem now seemed to be to increase the strength of the British frontier garrisons,¹⁰⁹ but the British government was loath to use such force and the matter could not be settled.

Thus, in 1914, the southern border situation was at an impasse. Britain held *de facto* control of several waterholes not included in British territory by the agreement of 1907 and was continuing to press the Ethiopian government to accept the Gwynn delimitation. The Ethiopian government clung steadfastly to the "red line" of 1907 and was unwilling to surrender the strategic wells demanded by the British. It is interesting to note that, despite the internal problems which continued to beset Ethiopia after Menilek's death in 1913, its government remained strong enough, and determined enough, to resist British pressure to recognize the border. And this border has only recently been settled between Kenya and Ethiopia by the cession to Ethiopia of the disputed strategic wells.

Ethiopia's southern expansion can be better understood within the context of the empire's general growth, which was closely associated with the accession of Menilek II to the throne of Shoa in 1865 and to the imperial crown in 1889. Generally speaking, Menilek's motives for his policy of territorial aggrandizement were to strengthen and increase his internal political power; to regain those areas which Ethiopian tradition suggested had been lost to Moslem and Galla invaders during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and to keep the European imperialists away from the heartland of Ethiopia. Although considerable expansion of Ethiopia's borders occurred before 1896, the Ethiopian victory over Italy at Adwa in that year threw the various adjacent European powers off balance, and provided Menilek with greater opportunities for expansion and with a large, experienced, well-equipped army to carry out his commands. Menilek's expansionary policies prior to 1896 were aimed primarily toward the ultimate goal of gaining the imperial crown; after 1896 his intent was to enlarge his empire as much as possible without provoking conflict with the adjacent European colonies and protectorates.

This essay on the southern-border situation clearly illustrates the

¹⁰⁹ Thesiger to Grey, Nov. 29, 1913, *ibid.*

methods that the Ethiopian government used to increase its domains. The basic philosophy was similar to the European idea of "effective occupation." The Ethiopians infiltrated areas, set up posts and fortified villages, and proceeded systematically to subdue the local population, often a violent process. The European governments with paper claims to the occupied areas were thus presented with a series of *faits accomplis* to which they could protest only ineffectually—they were not at all certain of what line of action to take in the face of the strength and vitality of Menilek's government. The emperor consistently worked within the framework of his declaration of 1891, implementing it to the best of his abilities. He expanded the borders of his country to the geographical limits described by the highlands and the key river systems, thus creating the Ethiopian empire that exists today.

X

The Triumph of the Congo Reform
Movement, 1905-1908

by

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A sort of gale is at present blowing upon the Congo State. This gale has come from England.

M. Woeste in the Belgian Parliament, 1906¹

I am convinced that when the whole story of the Congo has passed into history the Belgian people will feel that the work of the Congo Reform Association was a work of friendship and enlightenment in their behalf.

Sir Roger Casement, 1913²

THE PARAMOUNT ISSUES in the "Congo controversy" of the early twentieth century were constitutional government versus what might be described euphemistically as benevolent despotism, and colonial development for the benefit of the Congo versus exploitation of the Congo for the benefit of Belgium. The crucial years of this controversy were 1905–1908, between the time of the publication of the report of King Leopold's Commission of Inquiry in November 1905 and the annexation of the Congo in November 1908. During this period, the movement for Congo reform in Great Britain reached full strength and contributed greatly, if not decisively, toward Belgium's momentous annexation of the Congo. The acceptance of colonial responsibility was perhaps the most important decision made by a Belgian government since the separation from Holland in 1830. For the Congo, annexation was no less momentous; it marked the passing of the Leopoldian regime.

The outstanding feature of Leopold's rule in the Congo was an anachronistic despotism. In an age of constitutional monarchs, his critics frequently pointed out, the sovereign of the Congo State could say with more justification than Louis XIV, "l'état, c'est moi."³

¹ *Annales Parlementaires, Chambre*, Feb. 27, 1906.

² Casement to E. D. Morel, June 11, 1913, Morel Papers (MP), London School of Economics. Quotations from the Morel Papers by permission of the Librarian.

³ Arthur Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in Europe* (London, 1927), 198; see also F. Cattier, *Etude sur la Situation de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo* (Brussels, 1906), 324–327; E. Vandervelde, *Souvenirs d'un Militant Socialist* (Paris, 1939),

As criticism of his "Oeuvre Africaine" grew, along with his dividends, as he acquired the epithet "le Roi bâtisseur" because of public works built in Belgium with Congo funds, Leopold became less and less patient with those who doubted his good faith, more and more authoritarian, if not in his capacity as constitutional monarch of Belgium, at least in his role as sovereign of the Congo State. As the personification of Belgian patriotism, he intended to transform the Congo into a Belgian colony; but as the revenues of the Congo State increased he became less inclined to hand over his African empire to Belgium. Why did he finally yield? In 1905-1908, the Congo State was nearly wrecked on the shoals of public opinion. Leopold, the navigator, saw that the greatest danger was Great Britain. As E. D. Morel, the secretary of the Congo Reform Association, prophesied: "if the British Government stands firm—the 'Congo Free State' slave-ship will break in pieces, and disappear beneath the waves of public execration."⁴

The Congo reform movement (though it had its foreign counterparts) was essentially a British movement. The anti-Congo campaign was begun in the mid-1890s by the secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society, H. R. Fox Bourne, at a time when Europe and America were oblivious to what he called the "Civilization in Congo-land";⁵ it was ended two decades later, in 1913, by Morel, five years after the European powers and the United States began to regard the Congo controversy as a dead issue. On the basis of missionary reports and articles in the Belgian press, Fox Bourne and Morel (then editor of the *West African Mail*⁶) protested the system of commercial monopolies and the alleged cruelty to Africans in the Congo State—which in their eyes violated the two main premises of the Berlin Act of 1885: free trade and welfare of the indigenous population. The indignation at the "Congo atrocities" stirred up by Fox Bourne and Morel had concrete results in March 1903, when

70-71; and Jean Stengers, *Belgique et Congo: L'Elaboration de la Charte Coloniale* (Brussels, 1963), 27-29.

⁴ *Official Organ of the Congo Reform Association*, Aug. 1907.

⁵ This was the title of his book published in London in 1903.

⁶ For Morel's background as journalist, see F. Seymour Cocks, *E. D. Morel: The Man and His Work* (London, 1920), chap. 2.

the House of Commons passed a resolution "to abate the evils" in the Congo.⁷

In accordance with the resolution, the British government on August 8, 1903, dispatched a circular on the alleged abuses in the Congo to the powers signatory to the Berlin Act.⁸ From June to September of the same year the British consul in the Congo, Roger Casement, traveled in the interior of the Congo State.⁹ The publication of his report in February 1904,¹⁰ followed in March by the founding of Morel's Congo Reform Association (which in a few months included as members ten peers and over forty members of Parliament), marked an important point in the Congo reform campaign. "No one reading this report," commented the conservative *Morning Post*, "can come to any other conclusion than that the system in force in King Leopold's kingdom rests on the enslavement of the native population."¹¹

Casement's report temporarily united the British public,¹² but by the end of 1904 the British agitation for Congo reform had subsided. According to one of the stalwart defenders of the Congo State, James J. Harrison (whom Casement once described as an "addle-pated dwarf impresario"¹³), "public opinion has veered round and begun to doubt the truth of all these countless atrocities."¹⁴ One reason for the temporary eclipse of the Congo reform movement was

⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, CXXXII, May 20, 1903, 1304; on this debate, see Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Belgian Congo and the Berlin Act* (Oxford, 1919), 131.

⁸ Africa no. 14 (1903), *Accounts and Papers*, LXII.

⁹ See Wm. Roger Louis, "Roger Casement and the Congo," *Journal of African History*, V (1964), 99-120.

¹⁰ Africa no. 1 (1904), *Accounts and Papers*, LXII.

¹¹ *Morning Post*, Feb. 15, 1904. Quotations from newspapers are from lead articles unless otherwise indicated.

¹² "Nothing, indeed, is more remarkable in the movement for the reform of the Congo administration than the absolute unanimity with which the demand is advanced and supported by every section of public opinion in the country . . . Government and people are at one in demanding that an end shall be put to a state of things which recalls the worst days of the Spanish conquests in the new world." *Ibid.*, June 10, 1904.

¹³ Casement to Morel, n.d. (May? 1905), MP.

¹⁴ Harrison to *The Times*, Oct. 1, 1904.

the reply by the Congo government to Casement's report.¹⁵ The strength of Casement's inquiry—the reason it carried conviction—was his minute description of specific examples of maladministration, such as the one of a Congolese boy named Epondo, whose right hand, Casement reported, had been hacked off because of failure to fulfill the rubber quota. The Epondo case was of singular importance in Casement's report because it was the only atrocity which Casement had the opportunity to investigate personally.¹⁶ When the Congo authorities in their reply produced evidence certified by an American missionary that Epondo had lied to Casement and that Epondo's hand had been bitten off by a wild boar, many Englishmen began to doubt the validity of other parts of his account.

There were other reasons for the waning of the reform agitation in late 1904. In December, Morel was temporarily discredited by an unscrupulous Italian officer in the Congo State service named Benedetti, whose disclosures that the Congo Reform Association had tried to bribe him gave the erroneous impression, according to the *Morning Post*, that Morel was "a suborner of witnesses and an atrocity monger caught red-handed in . . . his trade."¹⁷ At the same time, the Federation for the Protection of Belgian Interests Abroad, supported by such prominent Englishmen as Sir Alfred Jones and Sir Hugh Gilzean Reid, increased its attacks against the anti-Congo movement, alleging that the motives of King Leopold's British critics were, "if not the secret political ambitions of the British Government, at least the thinly veiled covetousness of the merchants of Liverpool, who look on the Congo as an easy prey."¹⁸ Between the accusations and counter-accusations of the association and the federation, even the most astute, impartial student of the Congo controversy could not ascertain the truth; as *The Times* complained in January 1905, "no one can have perused the voluminous cor-

¹⁵ Africa no. 7 (1904), *Accounts and Papers*, LXII.

¹⁶ See Casement to Farnall, Feb. 20, 1904, FO 10/808 (Public Record Office, London), in which Casement elaborates circumstances concerning his report and protests against the Foreign Office's "editing."

¹⁷ *Morning Post*, May 12, 1905; for a different interpretation of the Benedetti affair, see F. Masoin, *Histoire de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, 2 vols. (Namur, 1912), I, 143.

¹⁸ *Morning Post*, May 12, 1905.

respondence on the subject . . . without a certain feeling of hopelessness as to the utterly contradictory nature of the evidence given."¹⁹

The founders of the Congo Reform Association, Casement and Morel, were absolutely convinced of the justice of their cause. Moved by an apocalyptic vision of evil in the Congo, they set out in 1904 to organize a crusade "with one clear, sole, determined end—namely to free the Congo people": "They, poor beings, are being treated in a way in which no other human race on this earth is being treated—their case is a special one—their need an appalling one."²⁰ Casement, as a civil servant, could not participate publicly in the Congo reform movement. As the "sleeping partner" in the Congo Reform Association,²¹ his role in the controversy after 1904 was restricted to advising Morel.

Morel was a man of marked intelligence and prodigious energy, who once while organizing the association wrote four hundred letters in ten days. He was an exceptionally gifted propagandist, able to persuade rationally as well as to excite emotionally. His contribution to the anti-Congo campaign was much more than rabble-rousing and tub-thumping. While Fox Bourne attacked the atrocities in the Congo, Morel attacked the system of administration that he believed inevitably led to atrocities. Morel saw the root of the Leopoldian system as the denial to Africans of their right to the land and its produce. In the words of one of the prominent figures of the reform movement, Sir Charles Dilke: "You showed us that all depended upon the right of the original black inhabitants of the soil to own their property and carry on trade."²² As Morel wrote in *Red Rubber*, his most famous and widely read work, the Congo State's administration was based on the principle that "the rubber which grows in the forest does not belong to the native. It belongs to King Leopold!"²³ The Africans were compelled to pay taxes.

¹⁹ *The Times*, Jan. 25, 1905.

²⁰ Casement to Fox Bourne, Jan. 25, 1904, Aborigines Protection Society Papers (APS), Rhodes House, Oxford.

²¹ Fox Bourne to Morel, March 10, 1904, MP.

²² Dilke to Morel, Feb. 6, 1908, Dilke Papers (DP), British Museum Add. Mss. 43917.

²³ E. D. Morel, *Red Rubber* (New York, 1906), 204.

Since they had no means to pay, they were forced to work for the state (or the concessionaire companies) and to collect for its benefit the rubber and other forest produce as "taxes in kind." "So he [Leopold] claimed the labor of the people to bring him their wealth which he has pirated."²⁴ The Congo government, as far as Morel was concerned, was a mere commercial enterprise, whose slogan might be expressed as, "No rubber, no profit; no compulsion, no rubber."²⁵ The result, Morel wrote in 1906, was that "the 'Congo Free State' has long ceased to exist." "It has given place to a political monster and international outlaw . . . The reek of its abominations mounts to Heaven in fumes of shame. It pollutes the earth. Its speedy disappearance is imperative for Africa, and for the world."²⁶

In Belgium, Casement's report and the denunciations of the Congo State were received with almost universal skepticism. Leopold was at the zenith of his power. With the exception of the radicals and socialists, whose attacks he dismissed as contemptuously as he did those by British humanitarians, the commercial prosperity of the Congo State was admired throughout Belgium. The clerical government, devoting all its energies to prevent the advance of socialism, therefore allowed Leopold a free hand in the Congo. Belgium was ruled by a triumvirate: Leopold; Woeste, the leader of the ultraclerical, ultraconservative majority of the Belgian parliament; and de Smet de Naeyer, the prime minister, through whose eminent financial ability were administered the sovereign's grandiose public-works projects.

Outwardly Leopold's position was impregnable; nevertheless, the British anti-Congo campaign had a profound effect on his rule. His response to the indictment of the Casement report was to appoint, in July 1904, a commission of inquiry, the purpose of which, at least in the opinion of the Congo reformers, was to placate the British Foreign Office. Leopold feared that the British might succeed in persuading the other powers to intervene in the Congo; the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry was a move to check this possibility; in Casement's view it was "not intended and *never was*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Morning Post*, March 23, 1904.

²⁶ Morel, *Red Rubber*, 212-213.

intended to find out anything detrimental to the Congo Government's interests."²⁷ In Belgium, however, the appointment of the commission was interpreted as a genuine attempt by Leopold to sift the facts and arrive at the truth—to stifle his British critics by proving that their charges were false. Even those in the Congo government itself took the commission seriously: "They express such confidence in the honesty of their commission," Sir Constantine Phipps, the British minister in Brussels, reported, "that I cannot believe any tricks will be played with the evidence."²⁸ The commissioners, de Schumacher (Swiss), Janssens (Belgian), and Nisco (Italian) were suspected in Britain for Congophile tendencies; but they were accepted nevertheless as men of integrity who would try to reach an impartial judgment. Only the Congo Reform Association regarded the commission as an utter farce.²⁹ Morel charged that its purpose was merely to soothe public opinion, and it did have this effect. The British Foreign Office, as well as most of the British press, suspended judgment on Leopold's Congo, pending the commission's report.³⁰

Leopold fully recognized the dangers of a censorious report from his own commissioners.³¹ He attempted to diminish its impact in the same way that he had tried futilely to suppress the Casement report,³² by striking a bargain with the British Foreign Office. Leopold's agent in these negotiations was his consul for the Congo State at Liverpool, Sir Alfred Jones.

Jones was the leading English opponent of the Congo reformers—in Casement's view a "poisonous serpent,"³³ "a bold and original

²⁷ Casement to Fox Bourne, private and confid., Oct. 15, 1904, APS (Casement's emphasis).

²⁸ Phipps to Campbell, private, Sept. 30, 1904, FO 10/811.

²⁹ See, e.g., Morel's letter to the *Morning Post*, March 21, 1905.

³⁰ See, e.g., *The Times*, Nov. 6, 1905, and *Official Organ*, Nov. 1905.

³¹ See especially J. Stengers, "Le Rôle de la Commission d'Enquête de 1904-5 au Congo," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves: Mélanges Henri Gregoire*, X (1950), 701-726.

³² See F. H. Villiers' memos of Dec. 10, 1903, FO 10/806, and Dec. 21, 1903, FO 10/807; Casement to Fox Bourne, private and confid., Oct. 15, 1904, APS; and Ruth Slade, *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State, 1878-1908* (Brussels, 1959), 287-288.

³³ Casement to Morel, Dec. 14, 1904, MP.

liar.”³⁴ In the eyes of his critics he was the British equivalent of Leopold on a lesser scale, a curious mixture of patriot, philanthropist, and pirate. Even the Congophobe *Morning Post* admitted that Jones was “a man respected in many walks of public life.”³⁵ He was president of the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, as well as consul for the Congo State; the latter position enabled him, in his own words, “to promote the interests of civilization, good government, sanitation, and development of British commercial interests [in the Congo].”³⁶ Jones’s African Steamship Company (a subsidiary of the Elder-Dempster Company) enjoyed a monopoly of traffic between Belgium and the Congo under contract with the Congo government. The head of a prominent Liverpool trading concern, John Holt (from whom the Congo Reform Association received much of its financial backing³⁷) charged that Jones’s “steamers are employed in carrying the bloodstained rubber of the Congo to Antwerp.” Jones, in brief, was accused widely, in the words of an anonymous critic, of being the unprincipled agent of “an enterprise piratical rather than commercial.”³⁸ When goaded into public apology for his association with the Congo State, he emphasized the difficulties of introducing both trade and civilization into tropical Africa. The *London Star* commented, with an acumen valid for other Congo-philes:

Sir Alfred feels his position acutely. It is not a nice position. It is, as he says, a position of considerable odium . . . he ventures to hope that nobody who knows him would believe him to be callous or cruel, or capable of indifference to human suffering. That is true. His fault is less valiant. It is his moral patience which displeases his friends. It is his Christian tolerance which vexes them. It is his power of extenuating the crimes of others

³⁴ Lying “is his chief asset in the game of life.” Casement to Morel, Nov. 2, 1905, MP.

³⁵ *Morning Post*, Dec. 17, 1904.

³⁶ Jones’s statement to Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, Oct. 29, 1907, quoted in *Official Organ*, Nov. 1907.

³⁷ See, e.g., Casement to Morel, May 12, 1905, MP. Full evidence of Holt’s support of the Congo Reform Association may be found in numerous letters from Holt to Morel in the Morel Papers. Holt himself had no financial interests in the Congo State but had suffered heavy losses in the French Congo. See E. D. Morel, *The British Case in French Congo* (London, 1903).

³⁸ Viator to *Morning Post*, June 28, 1906.

which saddens them. It is his ability to forgive wrongs done to others which saddens them.³⁹

Jones, like the British minister in Brussels, Phipps, believed that the best way to achieve reform in the Congo was to cooperate with the Congo government. "I [Jones] have preferred to work in the way which seemed best to me for the maintenance of good relations between Belgium and England, and for the reform of the Congo administration, and I shall not rest satisfied until my efforts meet with complete success. As to the consulship, I will not retain this one day beyond the time when I discover that I cannot use it for the good interests of humanity in that region."⁴⁰ There is no reason to believe that Jones was insincere in his wish for Congo reform; but, like Leopold himself, his financial connections with the Congo government made it difficult for him to persuade others of the purity of his motives, and left him vulnerable to charges of being representative of the "money-grubbing commercial spirit of the day."⁴¹

Jones approached the Foreign Office in September 1905 with the following proposal: that a British syndicate under his direction take over the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company (ABIR),⁴² the concessionaire company in the Congo most notorious for abuses. The ABIR territories extended over 30,000 square miles in the Equator district of the Congo State; the concession amounted to a monopoly of the entire trade of the area and included the right to collect a tax from Africans paid in rubber through forced labor. Jones's proposal was that the administration would be entirely in the hands of Englishmen; the only role of the Congo government would be to provide an armed force for protection. In return, a yearly sum would be paid to the Congo government and a share of the profits would be given to the ABIR company until it was compensated for withdrawal of its concession. Jones was willing to accept Leopold's offer, if he had the "approval of the Foreign Office."⁴³

³⁹ Quoted in *Official Organ*, Nov. 1907.

⁴⁰ Jones's statement to Liverpool Chamber of Commerce Oct. 29, 1907, quoted in *ibid.*

⁴¹ Casement to Morel, April 25, 1905, MP.

⁴² The name is misleading. Although founded in part by British capital, control had passed into Belgian hands; the Congo State itself owned half the shares.

⁴³ F. H. Villiers' memo of Sept. 8, 1905, FO 10/814. Jones's proposals on

"This is a very puzzling question," wrote Lord Lansdowne, the foreign secretary. On the one hand, if the concession were rejected, Britain would be criticized for failing to grasp an opportunity for remedying abuses to which the British themselves had constantly called attention. On the other hand, if a British syndicate were to take over the concession with the approval of the Foreign Office, the British government would incur definite responsibilities, "some of which may be of a very inconvenient kind."

It will not be possible for a syndicate formed in London to transform the administration by a stroke of the pen. Many of the present local agents, natives and Europeans, will have to be retained, and unless they "change their spots" very rapidly, we shall have complaints of cruelty, exaction, etc., for which we, and not the Belgian Government, will be held accountable.⁴⁴

Other officials in the Foreign Office agreed:

The Belgians would watch our proceedings with an exceedingly critical eye, and exaggerate with joy any failures.⁴⁵

Where a syndicate of Liverpool merchants have once tasted the sweets of 50 per cent, what prospect is there that they will voluntarily forgo these for the sake of the Congo native?⁴⁶

"I cannot help doubting," Lansdowne said, "whether the offer is not merely a clever move on the part of the Congo government intended to discount the report of the Commission [of Inquiry], and to place us in an embarrassing position."⁴⁷ The Foreign Office refused to become entangled in Leopold's concession scheme.⁴⁸

Jones handled these negotiations with an agility, if not duplicity, worthy of his royal patron. When he approached the Foreign Office in September 1905, he was eager to accept Leopold's proposal: it was an attractive offer financially; apparently he was genuinely anx-

behalf of Leopold were made orally and are recorded in this memo. On Oct. 7, the scheme was submitted to the Foreign Office in writing. See FO 10/815; cf. Slade, *English-Speaking Missions*, 294-295.

⁴⁴ Lansdowne's minute of Sept. 10, 1905, FO 10/814.

⁴⁵ Villiers' minute of Sept. 8, 1905, *ibid.*

⁴⁶ F. A. Campbell's minute of Oct. 11, 1905, FO 10/815.

⁴⁷ Lansdowne's minute of Sept. 10, 1905, FO 10/814.

⁴⁸ For this decision, see E. A. W. Clarke's memo of Oct. 11, 1905, minuted by F. A. Campbell and Lansdowne, FO 10/815.

ious "to benefit the natives";⁴⁹ and he could hardly afford to offend Leopold, who might cancel his profitable steamer contract. A month later, however, Jones had altered his views: "[he] is now equally eager to obtain our assistance in backing out of it."⁵⁰ The British syndicate scheme had been received hostilely in the British press;⁵¹ and Jones had completely failed to gain the cooperation of the British missionaries in the ABIR region.⁵² Steering between the Scylla of Leopold and the Charybdis of the British public, Jones had decided that Leopold's concessionaire company was not worth the price of British condemnation. The Foreign Office's refusal to approve the scheme enabled him to save face with Leopold. The British syndicate project foundered, along with Leopold's attempt to divert attention from the Commission of Inquiry report, which was released in November 1905.⁵³

The *Manchester Guardian* interpreted the report as "a complete vindication of those who have carried on a ceaseless agitation for investigation and reform."⁵⁴ The *Morning Post* called it "one of the most damning indictments levelled at any government in modern times."⁵⁵ Yet on the surface the report was euphemistic, lavish in praise of Leopold's civilizing work in Africa, and quick in defense of European officers of the Congo State accused of mutilating Afri-

⁴⁹ Villiers' minute of Sept. 8, 1905, FO 10/814.

⁵⁰ Clarke's memo of Oct. 11, 1905, FO 10/815.

⁵¹ "Doubtless King Leopold would have been prepared to admit a British syndicate into the ABIR territories if he could thereby have secured the continuance of his system in the rest of the Congo State. We are not at all sure, however, that the Sovereign of the Congo State will be pleased with Sir Alfred Jones's candid avowal that the syndicate would enjoy the exclusive right to all trade. Hitherto this has been disguised as the right of the state to the products of the soil on vacant lands. Now monopoly in trade emerges naked and unashamed." *Morning Post*, Nov. 28, 1905.

⁵² See Jones's correspondence with Grattan Guinness of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union in *Morning Post*, Nov. 28, 1905; Slade, *English-Speaking Missions*, 294-296.

⁵³ "The King was only waiting for Sir Alfred Jones's answer to authorize the issue of the report of the Commission of Inquiry." Clarke's minute of Oct. 11, 1905, FO 10/815. The report was published in *Bulletin Officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo*, 1905, 135-285.

⁵⁴ *Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 7, 1905.

⁵⁵ *Morning Post*, Dec. 13, 1905.

cans. Casement himself, no doubt surprised that the report was less of a whitewash than he had expected, described it as "a *very* queer production . . . I call it a series of half-truths each followed by its qualifying whole untruth!"⁵⁶ Casement's own report had been descriptive; it had not attempted to judge explicitly the good and bad features of the administration. It had shown through specific examples merely that Africans in the Congo State were forced to work hard, were often inadequately remunerated, and were frequently treated cruelly. By contrast the Commission of Inquiry report was a lengthy, analytical (though in some places naive⁵⁷) exegesis on good and bad colonial administration. The specific examples mentioned by the commissioners were given merely to substantiate their theories, not to create an impression of maladministration. The commissioners argued that forced labor was necessary and justified, but they objected to the brutal ways in which the Africans were compelled to collect rubber—taking of hostages, detention of chiefs, and the employment of sentries (armed Africans employed as overseers). They admitted as a "most legitimate" principle the state's claim to all "unoccupied and vacant lands"; but they concluded that "over-restrictive interpretations and over-severe applications" of this principle had resulted in the administration's arrogating to itself nearly all the land and monopolizing the "fruits of the soil." This was the point that Morel was so fond of making: "the root of the evil [will remain] untouched . . . till the native of the Congo becomes once more owner of his land and of the produce which it yields."⁵⁸

The Commission of Inquiry report proved conclusively to Belgians and Englishmen alike that abuses existed in the Congo. It vindicated the Congo reform movement, which gained strength not only in Britain, but also on the continent: "the volume of disinterested opinion . . . all over western Europe is now rising in arms against the atrocities of a monstrous regime."⁵⁹ In France the Congo State

⁵⁶ Casement to Morel, Nov. 18, 1905, MP.

⁵⁷ See Stengers, "Le Rôle de la Commission d'Enquête;" Cattier, *Etude sur la Situation*, 15-17; and A. Stenmans, *La Reprise du Congo par le Belgique* (Brussels, 1949), 297-306.

⁵⁸ Morel's interview in *Morning Post*, June 4, 1907. For his immediate reaction to the Commission of Inquiry report, see *Official Organ*, Nov. 1905.

⁵⁹ *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 22, 1906.

was denounced by Anatole France and Pierre Mille.⁶⁰ In Italy the Congo administration was discredited by disclosures that sums of money were given to certain newspapers to publish "letters, articles and news in favor of the Congo Free State," and by adverse reports from Italian officers in the Congo service.⁶¹ Most importantly, in Belgium itself Professor Cattier published a book called *Etude sur la situation de l'état indépendant du Congo*, in which he cogently argued as an acknowledged colonial expert that it was a "fundamental error" to admit that the finances of a colony should be devoted to anything other than its exclusive development. "Cattier's book is a great assistance to our cause," Sir Charles Dilke wrote.⁶²

The Belgian parliament debated Congo affairs in February and March 1906. Emile Vandervelde, the leader of the socialist party, called on the members of all parties as patriots and humanitarians to reform the Congo administration. "I ask you to forget the links which bind you . . . and to cling, above all, to that which your conscience dictates to you. In presence of facts denounced by all ministers of Christianity, Protestant and Catholic, you have no right to remain impassive, and to wash your hands of the blood which has been shed."⁶³ Vandervelde denounced the "reform commission" appointed by Leopold to consider the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The reform commission was composed of fourteen members, seven of whom were officials of the Congo State, and one an administrator of the ABIR company: "It is precisely as though one called in a slave trader to a conference to abolish the slave trade!"⁶⁴ The attacks against the Congo State were vigorous, the defense feeble. The debate was a decided victory in the cause of Congo reform.⁶⁵

In June 1906, Leopold responded to the mounting pressure for reform by decreeing "some more admirable laws."⁶⁶ Regardless of

⁶⁰ See Pierre Mille, *Le Congo Léopoldien* (Paris, 1905).

⁶¹ See *Morning Post*, June 13, 1905.

⁶² Dilke to Lord Fitzmaurice (fragment), Feb. 16, 1906, DP.

⁶³ *Annales Parlementaires, Chambre*, Feb. 20, 1906.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ On this debate, see Stengers, *Belgique et Congo*, 69-72.

⁶⁶ Fitzmaurice in the House of Lords, *Parliamentary Debates*, CLIX, July 3, 1906, 1584. See also *Bulletin Officiel*, 1905, 226-286.

whether the reforms were intended to be "illusory,"⁶⁷ they were overshadowed by the king's haughty letter that accompanied them: "My rights over the Congo are indivisible; they are the fruit of my labors and my expenditure . . . It is my duty to proclaim these rights to the world, since Belgium possesses none in the Congo beyond those which will come to her from me."⁶⁸ Leopold said, in effect, that the Congo was entirely his own affair, which he would conduct as he saw fit. As to Belgian annexation, "at present I have nothing to say."⁶⁹ Spurning international as well as Belgian opinion, "King Leopold tries to treat the rest of the world as cavalierly as Belgium."⁷⁰

Leopold's Congo administration was debated in the House of Lords a month later. Expressing the general mood of the debate, Lord Lansdowne, then out of office, with uncharacteristic vehemence emphasized that there was in the Congo "the existence of bondage under the most barbarous and inhuman conditions, and maintained for mercenary motives of the most selfish character."⁷¹ As foreign secretary, Lansdowne, though genuinely appalled at reports of atrocities, had been hesitant and indecisive in prosecuting the anti-Congo campaign. "Ghastly," he once wrote about the Congo maladministration; "but I am afraid the Belgians will get hold of the stories as to the way the natives have apparently been treated by men of our race in Australia."⁷² Relieved of his official responsibilities at the time of the advent of the Liberal government in December 1905, he became more bold: "Lansdowne in opposition can talk bravely—Lansdowne in office was a belated wayfarer seeking a harbor of refuge to escape the pitiless gibes of Leopold and company!"⁷³ By contrast, Sir Edward Grey, Lansdowne's successor, and Lord Fitzmaurice, the new parliamentary under-secretary, were "as emphatic as the most zealous of the reformers on the iniquity of the present system and the necessity for its abolition."⁷⁴

⁶⁷ *The Times*, June 18, 1906.

⁶⁸ *Bulletin Officiel*, 1906, 289.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 287-298.

⁷⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, June 20, 1906.

⁷¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, CLIX, July 3, 1906, 1584.

⁷² Lansdowne's minute on Mackie to Lansdowne, March 11, 1905, FO 10/815.

⁷³ Casement to Morel, private and confid., July 4, 1905, MP.

⁷⁴ *Morning Post*, Aug. 5, 1907.

Grey was "absolutely convinced of the shame of the thing."⁷⁵ "The Sovereign of the Congo State," he said in the House of Commons in July 1906, "speaks less as a governor and more as if he were the owner of private property . . . It has become like a private possession."⁷⁶ "My own personal feeling is that we are justified in any measures which will result in taking the Congo out of the hands of the King. He has forfeited every claim to it he ever had; and to take the Congo away from him without compensation would be less than justice, for it would leave him still with all the gains he has made by his monstrous system."⁷⁷

The object of Grey's Congo policy was the "Belgian solution"—in other words, Belgian annexation. Where did this idea originate, and how did it become the grand design of the British anti-Congo campaign? It did not start, it seems, in the British Foreign Office, which probably would not have moved toward any solution had it not been pressed by the strength of public sentiment.⁷⁸ It originated in the interchange of ideas between Morel and Sir Harry Johnston.

Morel had a one-track mind. He saw the "Congo evil" as "special and extraordinary."⁷⁹ Johnston, as an Africanist of many years' experience in varied capacities (and one of the early Congo explorers), remembered that the early years of the Congo State's administration were "positively beneficent,"⁸⁰ and that Britain's own colonial record was "very far from stainless."⁸¹ Morel clung to his views tenaciously and ferociously—as Casement remarked, like a "bulldog . . . very dangerous and gripping and seeing red."⁸² Johnston had trouble

⁷⁵ Emmot to Morel, June 26, 1904, MP. See also Grey's *Twenty-Five Years*, 2 vols. (New York, 1925), 190: "My own feeling was one of detestation of the system and its crimes and of the character of the man who was responsible for them."

⁷⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, CLX, July 5, 1906, 319-322.

⁷⁷ Grey to Hardinge, Feb. 28, 1908, in George M. Trevelyan, *Grey of Falldon* (London, 1937), 200. See also *Parliamentary Debates*, CLXXXIV, Feb. 26, 1908, 1870-1881.

⁷⁸ See for example Harry Farnall's minute of April 3, on Fox Bourne to Salisbury, March 27, 1902, FO 10/773: "Neither this country nor any other is likely to take active steps in the matter unless more or less forced to do so by public opinion."

⁷⁹ E. D. Morel's unpublished history of the Congo Reform Association, MP.

⁸⁰ Johnston to Morel, private and confid., July 4, 1907, MP.

⁸¹ Johnston's introduction to Morel's *Red Rubber*, chap. 7.

⁸² Casement to Morel, n.d. (May? 1905), MP.

making up his mind whether to take a prominent part in the anti-Congo campaign.⁸³ Morel had a romantic vision of the pre-Leopoldian Congo, a prosperous Congo thriving in trade. Johnston disagreed: "Oh *do* let us purge our minds of cant in these things," he wrote to Morel. "The pre-Bula Matari [pre-Congo State] trade you mention so often as having been so flourishing in western Congo-land. Well! I have *seen* that trade being carried on by much slavery, much gin and rum drinking, and endless wearisome caprices and tyranny, and I have come out of Congoland—like Grenfell [the missionary]—in 1883 as much desirous of a European control (in the best interests of the natives) as he did."⁸⁴ Johnston regarded Morel's ideas as sentimental and utopian. Morel, on the other hand, was utterly baffled about why Johnston had "the slightest difficulty in accepting the [Congo] gospel I preach as the 'ultimate' right thing to do."⁸⁵ His efforts to proselytize Johnston were in vain: "do leave me alone a little bit," Johnston wrote. "I don't think I shall ever become a crusader!"⁸⁶

Yet it was Johnston who shaped the strategy of the Congo reform movement. "Johnston's suggestion that Belgium should become nationally responsible for the administration of Congo affairs," Casement wrote to Morel in May 1905, "would offer a practical line of advance for all—it would unite the most convinced opponents of Congo misrule with the lukewarm ones—for it is a suggestion capable of being taken up even in Belgium."⁸⁷ This policy was accepted hesitantly by the rank-and-file Congo reformers, who were generally skeptical of Belgium's ability to administer the Congo. "It was . . .

⁸³ Compare the two following passages concerning a public meeting of the Congo Reform Association in June 1905: "I took the chair, very unwillingly" (Johnston's introduction to *Red Rubber*, chap. 7); "I saw Johnston, who jumped at it and will take the chair *con amore*" (Casement to Morel, May 4, 1905, MP).

⁸⁴ Johnston to Morel, private, Sept. 8, 1908, MP.

⁸⁵ Morel to Johnston, Sept. 10, 1908, MP.

⁸⁶ Johnston to Morel, Sept. 8, 1908; see also Johnston to Clarke, April 3, 1907, FO 367/68: "I am never at any time very keen on 'crusaders'; they so often cover either unreasonable sentimentalism or secondary and interested motives. At the same time, I have felt for some time past that the situation in the Congo was no ordinary case of African misgovernment."

⁸⁷ Casement to Morel, May 26, 1905, MP.

with misgivings as deep as your own," Dilke wrote to Morel, "that the Aborigines Protection Society . . . and myself . . . accepted the Belgian solution."⁸⁸ It was a solution to which some Congo reformers never agreed.⁸⁹ It was a conditional solution, to be accepted only if Belgium would promise to abolish the Leopoldian system and to administer the Congo in the "spirit as well as the letter" of the Berlin Act.⁹⁰ It was, above all, an expedient, an excellent way to prove that the Congo reform movement was not motivated by territorial or commercial greed.

If the Congo reformers accepted the "Belgian solution" reluctantly, the Foreign Office pursued it eagerly and dogmatically. The attitude of the Foreign Office was of course determined by European as well as African considerations.⁹¹ As an anonymous correspondent wrote to *The Times*:

Of late the historic position of Great Britain in Belgium has almost disappeared. The Belgian people believe, rightly or wrongly, that England has designs on the Congo State, and that the agitation fostered here by

⁸⁸ Dilke to Morel, Feb. 6, 1908, DP. See also Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London, 1959), 348.

⁸⁹ "Can a solution be found through Belgium? No, it is impossible, and that should be recognized from the outset. The Belgians have been given their chance. They have had nearly twenty-five years of undisturbed possession, and they have made it a hell upon earth. They cannot disassociate themselves from this work or pretend that it was done by a separate State. It was done by a Belgian King, Belgian soldiers, Belgian financiers, Belgian lawyers, Belgian capital, and was endorsed and defended by Belgian governments. It is out of the question that Belgium should remain in the Congo." A. Conan Doyle, *The Crime of the Congo* (New York, 1909), 123. Cf. Casement to Morel, Nov. 8, 1909, MP: "I hold with Doyle that the Belgians are really unfit to govern a subject and defenceless race. But you cannot say that—and failing getting rid of the Belgians altogether, which I fear is out of the question for many years yet, the next best thing is to try and bind them fast and sure and not leave 'reforms' to be of their goodwill and fancy."

⁹⁰ Technically it could not be proved that the Congo State had violated the Berlin Act; legally (according to the interpretations by the Law Officers of the Crown of the Anglo-Congolese treaties) Britain had no basis for intervention and could only remonstrate that the Congo government had not fulfilled the spirit of the Berlin Act.

⁹¹ "For Belgium might have been driven into the arms of Germany," Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon*, 196. For international complications, see also Casement to Morel, Nov. 2, 1905, MP.

certain interests has the tacit support of the government. And so Belgium is looking to her continental neighbours for support . . . Her trade . . . with Germany has grown rapidly.⁹²

The Congo was an irritant in Anglo-Belgian relations. It was also an issue that could reopen the scramble for Africa. "Some are inclined to think," Morel wrote to Grey, "that His Majesty's Government are bent upon . . . securing a right of way through Congo State territory for the Cape to Cairo railway."⁹³ This argument was used effectively by the Congo government in convincing the Belgian public of the sinister motives of Britain. According to Leopold himself:

Good relations with England are of great importance to Belgium; but England, in pursuance of her Cape to Cairo policy, is bent upon the dismemberment of the Congo Free State, as she was bent on the destruction of the Boer republics. She sets up humanitarian pretexts in the one case, as she did the wrongs of the outlanders and natives in the other; and, if the Free State became a Belgian colony tomorrow, she would still complain of its misgovernment until she had secured her slice.⁹⁴

Only by the "Belgian solution" could the Foreign Office disclaim territorial ambitions in central Africa.⁹⁵

The "Belgian solution" meant more than simple annexation of the Congo by Belgium. It signified the introduction of a humane native policy and the end of commercial monopolies; in the words of Morel, it meant "reform, drastic reform—that is . . . the system under which the Congo natives are robbed and murdered, rooted up, and . . . the basin of the Congo thrown open to commerce." During the summer and fall of 1906, it was by no means clear that this sort of radical reform would occur, or even that Belgium would annex the Congo. Leopold's June letter was interpreted in Belgium as well as in Britain as a declaration of absolutism; so was his didactic letter to Grey, which Leopold wrote after having been provoked by the British parliamentary debates in July 1906;⁹⁶ so also was his famous

⁹² *The Times*, Jan. 10, 1905.

⁹³ Morel to Grey, private and confid., Dec. 28, 1906, FO 367/68.

⁹⁴ As recounted in Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 99, very confid., Oct. 20, 1906, FO 367/33.

⁹⁵ See text pertaining to footnotes 131, 132, and 134 below.

⁹⁶ "If my views and dealings are not well known in England, the real state of things in the Congo is still less well known. Certain persons seem only to be occupied in finding or inventing faults and crimes. The natives' well-known

interview published in the *New York American* on December 10 of the same year, which, *The Times* wrote, in its "affectation of artless and engaging candor, is one of the most characteristic specimens of Congo tactics the world has seen."⁹⁷ When asked during this interview whether it was true that atrocious conditions existed in the Congo, Leopold replied: "Of course not, as a system of government." This remark was pregnant with meaning. It indicated to Leopold's critics that he believed that atrocities in the Congo were only sporadic and occasional, and that they resulted merely from individual officials who abused their powers, not from the system of exploitation on which the administration was based. Leopold believed that reform was possible within the system he had created. He believed, above all, that the Congo was entirely his own business, that, as Stengers has stated, he "owned the Congo just as Rockefeller owned Standard Oil."⁹⁸ Stung by criticisms, he publicly

propensity for lying greatly facilitates their task . . . The government of a state must be unique; it is alone qualified in its independence to insure the administration of the public interests of the state. Any other situation would give rise to a state of anarchy, of which the natives would take advantage to perpetuate their laziness and barbarous customs. As far as I am concerned I have always clearly and publicly defined my aspirations. When I entered the international field I have always said, and I repeat it, that I devoted my efforts to civilization, and to the free expansion of trade. I still hold to the same flag. You may, perhaps, find my letter too long and too outspoken. I belong to an independent country, the institutions of which are the most liberal in existence. I have served this country in public office for fifty-five years without interruption. I have devoted my attention to central Africa for twenty-six years, also uninterruptedly, animated with that Belgian sentiment which is neither blood-thirsty, despotic, nor unenlightened." King Leopold to Grey, July 17, 1906, FO 367/32.

⁹⁷ *The Times*, Dec. 17, 1906. Leopold had said in his interview: "Financially speaking . . . I am a poorer man, not a richer, because of the Congo . . . They see me as a boa-constrictor squeezing the life out of the blacks to put gold into my purse. Why should I do such a thing? . . . I have sufficient money for my wants. I do not wish any more. I am not a business man." Cf. Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 153, confid., Dec. 14, 1906, FO 367/33: "The astounding assertion that his philanthropic efforts in Africa had seriously impoverished His Majesty had been . . . really and deliberately made to this newspaper correspondent by the King."

⁹⁸ J. Stengers, "La Place de Leopold II dans l'Histoire de la Colonisation," *La Nouvelle Cléo* (1949-1950), 527.

professed, sometimes arrogantly, sometimes disingenuously, his faith in the regime as well as in his absolute rights.

Leopold's extravagant utterances consolidated his opponents, though this was less true in Belgium than abroad. The June letter was generally considered a "royal blunder," but Leopold's defenders in Belgium pointed out that the letter had to be read in the context of the violent attacks that had provoked it; that it was not a declaration of absolutism, but a "solemn recommendation"; and that Leopold should be admired for taking such a bold stand. Owing to the hostile reception in Britain of his June proclamation, Leopold was able to point forcefully to reasons for his continued rule in the Congo. "The best way to keep Belgium out of international complications resulting from England's African ambitions," he said, "is to put off the annexation of the Congo, with all its attendant financial problems, as long as possible, and let the King-Sovereign alone bear the brunt of the British attack."⁹⁹ Contemptuous of parliamentary politics, Leopold did not want the Congo to be administered under parliamentary control. Staggered by the vast financial operations in the Congo, and hesitant to accept so complicated and onerous an inheritance, the Belgian parliament procrastinated. Although shocked by the disclosures of the Commission of Inquiry's report, the leaders of the clerical and liberal parties were unwilling to antagonize their king, not so much on grounds of principle as because of Leopold's personal authority and their own timidity. Nevertheless in late 1906, on the eve of the great parliamentary debate on the Congo, public pressure in Belgium for annexation was rapidly mounting; but this was not the immediate reason for Leopold's decision in favor of annexation.¹⁰⁰

In November 1906, Edward Grey stated to a delegation of Congo reformers that "it will be impossible for us to continue to recognize indefinitely the present state of things."¹⁰¹ As *The Times* commented, "That is the plainest warning yet addressed to King Leopold and it

⁹⁹ Quoted in Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 99, very confid., Oct. 20, 1906, FO 367/33.

¹⁰⁰ On this question see J. Stengers, "Quand Leopold II s'est-il Rallié à l'Annexion du Congo par la Belgique?" *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge*, XXIII (1952), 783-824.

¹⁰¹ *The Times*, Nov. 21, 1906.

is one which he will do well to heed.”¹⁰² A few days later, news reached Europe that the American government had joined the anti-Congo campaign. Deluged by public petitions, and guided by a report from the American consul in the Congo that the Congo government was “nothing but a vast enterprise for exploitation,”¹⁰³ Elihu Root, the secretary of state, instructed the American representative in London to cooperate with Grey to bring about “amelioration of conditions in the Congo.”¹⁰⁴ On December 10, Senator Lodge introduced a resolution to the effect that the president would have the Senate’s “warm support” in whatever action might be necessary to achieve reform in the Congo State.¹⁰⁵ These rapid developments, especially those in the United States, came as a tremendous shock to King Leopold, who feared that the anti-Congo campaign was gaining such momentum that it would spread to still other countries. He yielded, mainly because of the stand taken by the British and American governments. In December 1906, King Leopold decided that Belgium should annex the Congo.¹⁰⁶

The historic debate in the Belgian parliament during the winter of 1906 was followed with avid interest throughout Europe and America. Seen from abroad, the main issues were the welfare of Africans and commercial freedom in the Congo. In Belgium, however, the point of paramount interest was not maladministration (as had been the case in previous debates), but the legal and constitutional implications of the June letter, which had imposed arbi-

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Slocum to Secretary of State, Dec. 1, 1906, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1907.

¹⁰⁴ Root to Carter, Dec. 10, 1906, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Originally the resolution was worded “that the native inhabitants of the Congo Free State have been subjected to inhuman treatment”; but it was amended to read “the native inhabitants of the Congo basin.” The result of this ingenious revision was to change a censure of Leopold into “an insult to ourselves Britain and France and Germany.” (Clarke’s minute of March 4, 1907, FO 367/68.) “It appears that Senator Spooner, of Wisconsin, intended to draw the attention of the Senate to this change, but was dissuaded from doing so by the Belgian Minister, and that the majority of the Senators voted for the resolution without appreciating the real meaning of the change.” Howard to Grey, Africa no. 32, confid., Feb. 19, 1907, FO 367/68.

¹⁰⁶ See Stengers, “Quand Leopold.”

trary conditions on the transfer of the Congo State.¹⁰⁷ Attacking these conditions, Paul Hymans, the liberal leader, asked de Smet de Naeyer whether annexation would occur by a unilateral act of the Belgian parliament or by a bilateral convention between Belgium and the Congo State. In other words, would the Belgian parliament be free to deal as it pleased with the future administration of the Congo, or would its freedom be fettered by obligations contracted with the king? De Smet de Naeyer conceded finally that the law establishing the future government of the Congo should be the work of the Belgian parliament alone, thus throwing Leopold's autocratic June letter to the winds.¹⁰⁸

Leopold, though having decided that it was in his best interests for Belgium to annex his African empire, by no means had intended to give up his sovereign rights as ruler of the independent state of the Congo. He was annoyed at de Smet de Naeyer for having surrendered so much. Throughout 1907 and part of 1908, Leopold struggled to have his own terms accepted. Even after annexation, he was determined to influence, if not control, Congo affairs; and he intended that revenues from the Congo should continue to be allocated for public works in Belgium.

During this period the British Congo reformers assumed the responsibility of enlightening the Belgians about the nature of the heavy burden they were about to acquire. "Bearing no enmity to the Belgian people," Morel wrote in May 1907, "we should deplore that the Belgian[s] . . . find themselves committed to annexation of the Congo without being in a position to judge the issues."¹⁰⁹ The issues that the Congo Reform Association tried to place before the

¹⁰⁷ "In assuming the sovereignty of the Congo, with all property, rights, and advantages attaching to it, my legatee will, as is just and necessary, undertake to respect all engagements of the ceded state with respect to third parties, as well as the acts by means of which I have . . . provided for the indorsement of . . . the foundation of the *Domaine de la Couronne*, the establishment of the *Domaine National*. My legatee will also respect the obligation not to diminish in any way the integrity of the revenues of these institutions without granting them equivalent to the loss of revenue involved." *Bulletin Officiel*, 1906, 297-298. On the question of the "domains," see J. Stengers, *Combien le Congo a-t-il Coûté à la Belgique?* (Brussels, 1957), chap. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Masoin, *Histoire*, I, 206-207; Stenmans, *La Reprise*, 346-369.

¹⁰⁹ *Official Organ*, May 1907.

Belgian public were both political and economic. Politically the Congo reformers, who by 1907 included most of the British press¹¹⁰—an important point, since the press was the main medium of communication with the Belgian public—feared that annexation on Leopold's terms would mean merely a perpetuation of the Leopoldian regime. The fall of de Smet de Naeyer's ministry in April 1907 (ostensibly on a matter of domestic politics, but really because of de Smet de Naeyer's inability to agree with Leopold on the Congo issue) was interpreted in Britain as a victory for Leopold in his efforts to maintain his authority in Congo affairs.

De Trooz, the new prime minister, *The Times* observed, was an "unqualified 'King's friend'; with M. Renkin, the new minister of justice [who in 1908 became the first Belgian colonial minister] and M. Delbeke, who has been appointed minister of public works, he stands without concealment for the old regime, for absolutist government in the Congo, and opposition to all reform." Further, "They are understood to be there because they will do what is pleasing to the King, and everyone knows that what the King desires as regards the Congo is the perpetuation of the old system, the stifling of inquiry, and the annexation of the Free State only on such terms as will leave His Majesty in full possession of the absolutism he now enjoys."¹¹¹ It is obvious, said the *Morning Post*, that the annexation of the Congo by Belgium "can only be satisfactory if it is complete and unrestricted, if it gives the Belgian nation a free hand to carry out necessary reforms."¹¹² "It is certain that public opinion in this country will not recognize any scheme of transfer that does not seem to provide for real and radical reforms."¹¹³ In the words of Edward Grey, annexation must be "a reality and not a sham."¹¹⁴ As seen by *The Times*, the crucial question involved in making the Congo transfer a reality was "whether, if Belgium annexes the Congo, annexation can take place on terms that will make it a re-

¹¹⁰ With the principal exceptions of the *Catholic Herald*, the *Catholic Times*, and the *Daily Graphic*.

¹¹¹ *The Times*, May 4, 1907; cf. Carton de Wiart, *Léopold II* (Brussels, 1944), 159-164; Stenmans, *La Reprise*, 369-376.

¹¹² *Morning Post*, April 10, 1908.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, June 4, 1908.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in *The Times*, Feb. 28, 1908.

formed colony, or whether it may not have the sinister result of extending King Leopold's absolutism over a hitherto constitutional country."¹¹⁵

"Absolutism" was one of the powerful shibboleths of the British anti-Congo campaign. Yet it was an extraordinarily imprecise battle-cry. Even admitting that Leopold was "the absolute ruler of the Congo," how he might remain so after annexation was at best a matter of speculation. However justified the fear of absolutism might have been, the concrete issues in the Congo controversy after the Belgian parliamentary debate of December 1906 were more economic than political.

The real plague spots in the Congo were the regions handed over to the chartered companies. The Congo State, by investing in the companies which administered and exploited its territories, was the apotheosis of the chartered-company system of empire building. "The body which was set up to govern was a body existing for private profit, and bent primarily on making the work of government pay dividends. It has no responsibility to the governed, nor to anyone else except the financial promoters, whose main interest it is that the governed shall be fleeced."¹¹⁶ "It cannot be too frequently asserted," commented the *Morning Post*, "that the anomaly that differentiates the Congo Free State from all other African communities is the fact that its vast territories are administered not in the interest of the inhabitants, but of a group of persons in Europe who for courtesy's sake are styled the Congo Government."¹¹⁷ The rankest "excrecence"¹¹⁸ of this system of exploitation was unquestionably the *Domaine de la Couronne*, the private preserve of King Leopold. Lying west of Lake Leopold II, the *Domaine de la Couronne* was a territory twice the size of England. No other region in the Congo was more notorious for cruelty to Africans, and no other was richer in rubber. It was the best slice of the Congo cake.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ *The Times*, May 4, 1907. See also *Official Organ*, Oct. 1907: "The bill proposed by the Belgian Government for the administration of the Congo is the very negation of national responsibility, the very incarnation of unfettered absolutism."

¹¹⁶ *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 22, 1906.

¹¹⁷ *Morning Post*, Aug. 28, 1906.

¹¹⁸ *The Times*, June 18, 1906.

¹¹⁹ See especially Cattier, *Etude sur la Situation*, 211-245.

According to Cattier in 1906, the *Domaine de la Couronne* had already yielded profits in rubber of nearly 3 million pounds sterling, a large proportion of which (as de Smet de Naeyer admitted) had been invested in real estate in the vicinity of Brussels and Ostende. The *Domaine de la Couronne* became the burning issue in the transfer of the Congo State to Belgium.

Leopold's June letter in 1906 had declared that the revenue from the *Domaine de la Couronne* after annexation must continue to be devoted to the construction and upkeep in Belgium of projects such as the ones described by *The Times* as "gorgeous palaces of art and pompous public buildings."¹²⁰ This was a condition he would not yield. According to the draft treaty of cession published in December 1907, the Belgian government acquiesced in his demand. The revenues of the *Domaine de la Couronne*, however, could be maintained only under the Leopoldian system of forced labor, with all its attendant abuses. Without severely exacted forced labor, the colonial budget would show a deficit. If there were a deficit, could expenditures from Congo revenues be justified for architectural and other sumptuary purposes in Belgium? As far as both the Congo Reform Association and the British Foreign Office were concerned, the Belgian government's concession to Leopold on the issue of the *Domaine de la Couronne* was tantamount to admitting that Belgium had no intention of making a real break with the past.

The tendency of the British Foreign Office in regard to the Congo, as Roger Casement once observed, was to "hope—hope for this, hope for that—never to resolutely think out what could be accom-

¹²⁰ *The Times*, Dec. 21, 1907. For the conditions of the June letter, see note 7 above. In the mind of one British diplomat, Sir Arthur Hardinge, the issue of exploitation for the benefit of the metropole was the fundamental difference between the British and Congolese systems of administration. "Our system was that the revenues of a dependency were to be devoted to its development, to its defence, and to the welfare of its population, and that any surplus was to be expended in it either on remunerative works of public utility, on paying debts, or on directly relieving the burden of taxation. The system of the Congo Government, on the other hand, seemed to be to extract as much revenue as possible from its African territories for the purpose of public works, improvements, etc., in Belgium, which however admirable in themselves, were of no benefit to the subject populations." Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 129, Sept. 25, 1907, FO 367/69.

plished and then set to work to bring it about."¹²¹ Until 1907, there was a good deal of truth in this statement, though perhaps there was more in the comment by a Foreign Office official that the British policy was "to avoid pin pricks while saving ourselves for a grand assault."¹²² In any case, in 1907 there was a hardening of thought about Belgium and the Congo.

The two people who contributed most to the Foreign Office discussion were Sir Arthur Hardinge and E. A. W. Clarke. Hardinge was the British minister in Brussels (who had replaced Phipps in early 1906), a scholar as well as a diplomat who, while a fellow of All Souls, Oxford, had chosen diplomacy as a career. Clarke was the head of the African department of the Foreign Office, an exuberant twentieth-century version of his predecessor, Sir Percy Anderson. An incorrigible conservative, Hardinge thought that the Foreign Office under the Liberal government was too susceptible to the "sentimentalism of the Exeter Hall type."¹²³ By contrast, Clarke was closer in temperament to the Congo reformers. He was deeply disturbed by the reports of atrocities. "We have supped full of Congo horrors," he once wrote, "but I really don't think we have ever had anything in its way more horrible than that instance of ill-treatment of the child Katuma." According to the British consul in the Congo, Katuma was a Congolese boy of seven years who had been carried off by his parents to attend one of the Congo State's schools. "No attempt whatever is made to teach him his letters but he is instead made to carry stones and because the wretched creature is unable to execute his tasks to the satisfaction of his masters he is not only put in chains but he is kept in them night and day for three months."¹²⁴ Clarke, with Edward Grey's approval, instructed Hardinge to ask the Congo authorities about Katuma.

The results of this one incident reveal a good deal about Foreign Office attitudes toward Congo reform. Hardinge asked the Foreign Office to reconsider his instructions, not only on grounds that there was no way of ascertaining the facts in the case, but also because there would be no practical results from a complaint to the Congo

¹²¹ Casement to Morel, Aug. 16, 1909, MP.

¹²² Clarke's minute of Dec. 3, 1906, FO 367/5.

¹²³ Hardinge, *Diplomatist in Europe*, 194.

¹²⁴ Clarke's minute of Dec. 3, 1906, FO 367/5.

officials. Would the British government, he asked, protest a similar case if it had happened "in Algeria or in a German African colony?"¹²⁵ Clarke retorted angrily: "If no reform was ever begun until the reformer was absolutely *sure* his fiery speeches would have effect the world's history would be very different."¹²⁶ Further, "Of course we should not say anything about a similar case in Algeria or German East Africa: in the first place because *au fond* the French and Germans are boys too big to interfere with. It may be quite possible and one's duty to prevent a big boy bullying a small but it is quite another matter to stop a strong man beating a little."¹²⁷

In some respects the behavior of Britain toward Belgium over the Congo did (to straighten out Clarke's analogy) resemble a big boy bullying a small one. According to the law officers of the Crown, the Congo State was an independent and sovereign state, which Belgium could annex without the consent of the other powers. Legally Britain had no more right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Congo State than in those of France or Germany.¹²⁸ Yet Grey planned to "regard the Congo as a territory without a government and equally open to every one," unless Belgium annexed it. "I know there may be some technical difficulties in the way of the course I propose," he wrote. "But public opinion here will make light of technical difficulties and I consider that the state of slavery [there] . . . is such as to transcend technical difficulties and the letter of treaties."¹²⁹

As far as legality was concerned, France had pre-emptive rights over Congo territory through the Franco-Congolese agreements of 1884 and 1895. Grey foresaw that the state of affairs in the Congo could become so intolerable that France might have to exercise this right; to prevent international rivalry, he went so far as to suggest to the French ambassador in London that France might easily come to an agreement with Germany to partition the Congo State between

¹²⁵ Hardinge to Barrington, private, Dec. 16, 1906, FO 367/5.

¹²⁶ Clarke's minute of Dec. 21, 1906, FO 367/5.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ See, e.g., W. E. Davidson's minute of May 16, 1900, FO 10/754: "Beyond strong remonstrance we have no further remedy short of the employment of actual force."

¹²⁹ Grey to Hardinge, Feb. 28, 1908, in Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon*, 198-200. Cf. Grey's statement in *Twenty-Five Years*, I, 192: "We hoped we were making him [Leopold] uncomfortable; it was all we could do."

them.¹³⁰ This was, in any case, a proposal filled with uncertainties. In the minds of his colleagues, Grey, by disclaiming British territorial ambitions while encouraging those of France and Germany, had jeopardized Britain's strategic position in Africa. The British ambassador in Paris wrote:

I believe that the ambition and ultimate aim of Germany is to extend her African possessions from sea to sea, viz. from the Indian Ocean to the south Atlantic . . . If we begin by disclaiming all territorial desires we leave the cake to be cut up between France and Germany, and if later on we make objection to a prospective allotment between those two powers France would have reason to say you told me that so long as the natives were secured in their rights and the Berlin Act trade arrangements were observed you had no desires. What have you to complain of?¹³¹

The result of such a policy might be to give Germany the opportunity of making with France a bargain which would bring Germany in still further contiguity than now with British interest in Africa.¹³²

Clarke recognized this as a "suicidal course."¹³³ Grey, modifying his stand, wrote: "I am not anxious personally to see us assume the responsibility for more territory in tropical Africa, but if France proceeds to make an [arrangement] with Germany about the Congo we should have to consider how our frontiers would be affected and put in our word according to what our interests seemed to require."¹³⁴ Britain would resist, in Clarke's words, "anything which would enable Germany to bar the way definitely between our possessions in the South and Egypt and the Sudan."¹³⁵

¹³⁰ Grey to Bertie, Africa no. 17, confid., April 19, 1907, FO 367/68. Cf. Clarke's memo of Dec. 13, 1906, FO 367/68: "We should not object, failing all else, to cutting the Congo up."

¹³¹ Bertie's memo of Nov. 25, 1907, private, with minutes by Clarke, Charles Hardinge, and Grey, FO 367/74.

¹³² Bertie to Tyrrell, private, Oct. 31, 1907, FO 367/70. Also Johnston to Clarke, April 3, 1907, FO 367/68: "I believe myself that behind Leopold and all the Congo trouble stands Germany . . . Germany is not at present in a position to stretch out her hand over the Congo Free State, so that it serves her purpose better that Leopold shall remain in possession of it." See also Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 162, confid., Dec. 21, 1906, FO 367/33.

¹³³ Clarke's minute of Dec. 2, 1907, on Bertie's memo of Nov. 25, 1907, FO 367/74.

¹³⁴ Grey's minute on Bertie's memo of Nov. 25, 1907, *ibid.*

¹³⁵ Clarke's minute of Dec. 2, 1907.

These considerations about French and German territorial designs in Africa were largely academic. British policy was based on the assumption that Belgium *would* annex the Congo, but that Belgium herself could not be trusted to "lay the foundations of the economic and moral regeneration of the native."¹³⁶ The British public demanded guarantees. To secure them, Clarke proposed a reconvo-cation of the Berlin conference: "Personally I rather share Mr. Morel's views that no great good is likely to result from the annexation of the Congo by Belgium, even if that annexation takes place . . . A conference is certainly our best, if not our only, chance of seeing our wishes in regard to affairs in the Congo given effect to."¹³⁷ Hardinge pointed out that the logical prelude to a conference—which should be a last resort—would be a policy of nonrecognition:

Before recognizing as a signatory of the Berlin Act the validity of the transfer we must ask for explicit and positive guarantees . . . our formal refusal to recognize the cession without the guarantees insisted on by the Congo Reform Association would satisfy the latter that we were acting energetically on the lines constantly urged by them, and were applying that impressive moral leverage in which they profess such touching faith . . . there might be no immediate cessation of all the grave abuses on the Congo; but this latter result can in no case be looked for unless Belgium at once voluntarily undertakes the work of reform.¹³⁸

Arthur Hardinge, the scholarly diplomat who despised humanitarians, was responsible more than any other Foreign Office official for the perpetuation of the anti-Congo campaign until 1913. It was Hardinge who shaped the British policy of nonrecognition.¹³⁹

In January 1908, Hardinge, along with the American minister, Henry Lane Wilson, called at the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Hardinge said that Britain would reserve the right of recognition of the transfer if the Congo were not administered "in the spirit of the Berlin Act." The Foreign Office demanded three specific reforms:

- 1) Relief of the natives from excessive taxation.
- 2) The grant to the natives of sufficient land to ensure their ability to

¹³⁶ *Official Organ*, Nov. 1907.

¹³⁷ Clarke's minute of Jan. 21, 1907, FO 403/374.

¹³⁸ Arthur Hardinge to Charles Hardinge, private, Dec. 20, 1907, FO 367/70.

¹³⁹ See Wellesley's dissenting memo, n.d. (Dec. ? 1907), with minutes by Clarke, Langley, Charles Hardinge, and Grey, FO 367/70.

obtain not only the food they require, but also sufficient produce of the soil to enable them to buy and sell as in other European colonies.

3) The possibility for traders whatever their nationality may be to acquire plots of land of reasonable dimensions in any part of the Congo for the erection of factories so as to enable them to establish direct trade relations with the natives.¹⁴⁰

Once committed to making British recognition contingent on specific reforms, Foreign Office policy became inflexible. And by choosing to measure the "spirit of the Berlin Act" by the yardstick of land and tax legislation, the Foreign Office denied itself the chance to appraise the Congo situation by events of incalculable importance—such as King Leopold's cession of the *Domaine de la Couronne* (under the new name of the *Fondation de la Couronne*) in March 1908.¹⁴¹

The cession of the *Fondation de la Couronne* signified that Belgium had at last, to use Hardinge's phrase, succeeded in "buying out" King Leopold. The Belgian government agreed to subsidize King Leopold's public-work projects; but the funds were to come from the Belgian treasury. It was thus officially recognized that parks, museums, palaces, hippodromes, triumphal arches, and "bathing cities unique in Europe" should not be built by funds raised in the Congo. It was a substantial triumph of the principle that the Congo should not be exploited for the benefit of Belgium.

The other major issue in the Congo controversy, absolutism, for all practical purposes had been killed by the Belgian parliamentary debate of December 1906, which repudiated Leopold's autocratic June letter. Yet the issue lingered on, even through the annexation debates of the spring of 1908 and the actual enactment of annexation by the Chamber and Senate during August and September of the same year. Suspicion of the King's sinister influence died only with Leopold himself. His death in December 1909 profoundly affected Congo affairs, of course. From the Belgian point of view, the colonial administrators were left free to promote reforms and to govern the colony as they themselves were inclined; for the British, there was considerably less ground for suspicion that reforms were intended to be superficial and sporadic. But the Belgian administra-

¹⁴⁰ Africa no. 3 (1908), *Accounts and Papers*, LXII.

¹⁴¹ On this point, see Stengers, *Belgique et Congo*, chap. 4.

tors were unable to revolutionize the Leopoldian system immediately, and the British Foreign Office could not ignore reports from their consuls in the Congo that there was little administrative improvement to be seen there. As Hardinge explained to King Albert, Leopold's successor, in July 1910: "The confidence felt in England in His Majesty's good intentions and high ideals had largely allayed the old feelings of distrust, but . . . the extreme Congo reformers, who were slower to convince, demanded positive evidence of improvement . . . our consular reports had, unfortunately, so far not justified the hopes of those among us who believed in and wished well to the Belgian solution."¹⁴²

The Foreign Office, while wishing to heal the wound in Anglo-Belgian relations, could not, owing to agitation against Congo abuses in Parliament and from the humanitarians, acknowledge the transfer as legitimate until there was evidence that the abuses had been abolished. The Belgian government, for its part, while wishing genuinely to introduce adequate reforms, was unable to rectify quickly the evils of a system over two decades old. This placed the Belgian government in an extremely embarrassing position: "The Belgians are a proud little people, very sensitive to the opinion of other countries, and the implied suggestion that they are not living up to civilized standards in the Congo is one which they feel somewhat acutely. Their papers may now and then say 'we don't care' . . . but the present situation is certainly galling to their national self-esteem."¹⁴³ As Casement wrote to Morel in 1910, "the Belgian State cannot dispense with the goodwill of mankind as the one-man machine of King Leopold could do."¹⁴⁴

The continued agitation from Congo reformers was based on their conviction that Belgium had "no intention of reversing the . . . Leopoldian system."¹⁴⁵ It could not be denied, Morel wrote in 1912, that Africans were still not permitted to own their own land. In theory, most of the land in the Congo still belonged to the state. Renkin, the Belgian colonial minister, tried to handle this bitter issue by avoiding theoretical discussions of sovereign rights and con-

¹⁴² Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 133, confid., July 22, 1910, FO 367/213.

¹⁴³ Hardinge to Grey, Africa no. 101, confid., June 10, 1910, *ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Casement to Morel, July 12, 1910, MP.

¹⁴⁵ *Morning Post*, Dec. 23, 1907.

centrating on practical measures of reform. As far as he was concerned, colonial rule should not be judged by controversial standards of property ownership, but by the way in which Africans were treated. By 1913, the British government was obliged to accept this view; recognition could not be withheld from a benevolently ruled Congo in which freedom of trade had been restored. According to Morel's biographer: "By May 1913 very little was left to be done. The entire Leopoldian policy had been completely abandoned. The atrocities had ceased. The concessionaire companies had either vanished or had been reduced to impotence, and with their disappearance the swarms of irregular levies which had terrorized the countryside had also gone. A responsible government had replaced an irresponsible despotism."¹⁴⁶ Morel said in 1913 that "the Association has failed in securing one only of its objects . . . a specific act of the Belgian Parliament recognizing the native tenure in land."¹⁴⁷

The happy ending to the drama of Congo reform was the general recognition of E. D. Morel as the hero of the day. "That damned old scoundrel in Brussels must hate you with a pretty vigorous hatred," Casement wrote him in 1907. "The King of Beasts to be beaten by a poor, lowly, unknown man! The pen in your case, in the hand of a very honest, very brave, and very unceasing human being has beaten the Principalities of Powers of Darkness out of their domains—Leopold has nothing, absolutely nothing, but his gold left."¹⁴⁸ It was Morel who caused the name of King Leopold to reek "in the nostrils of the civilized world,"¹⁴⁹ who convinced the world that the real atrocity of the Congo was that "the native owns nothing,"¹⁵⁰ and who could claim, only half in jest, that the Congo exposures "had permeated wherever civilization extended, and even beyond the pale of civilization—into the palace of the Sovereign of the Congo State."¹⁵¹ Within a year of his vindication by the Commission of Inquiry report, Morel had risen from the obscurity of a free-lance journalist to the national prominence of a latter-day

¹⁴⁶ Cocks, *Morel*, 161.

¹⁴⁷ Quoted in *The Times*, June 17, 1913.

¹⁴⁸ Casement to Morel, Oct. 16, 1907, MP.

¹⁴⁹ *Official Organ*, Aug. 1907.

¹⁵⁰ *Manchester Guardian*, April 20, 1907.

¹⁵¹ *Morning Post*, Feb. 22, 1908.

Wilberforce. He was not universally admired, even in Britain or even in the councils of the Congo Reform Association itself. Harry Johnston regarded him as "a visionary and next door to a lunatic."¹⁵² He was a quixotic figure, a knight-errant in search of controversy as well as justice. He did overplay his emotional appeals to pity and imagination, as when he once described the plight of the Congo people at a public meeting: "In the vast crown domain, two and one half times the size of England, the natives wandering distractedly through the gloomy forest, exposed to the attacks of wild beasts, to the inclemencies of the weather, to the hardships of all kinds, far from home and wife and child, shelterless, hopeless, searching for rubber, rubber, rubber, to minister to the disordered ambitions of Leopold II, his courtiers and his mistresses."¹⁵³ But if he exaggerated, he did so in the conviction that he was justified by his Christian mission to turn "the biggest pagan in Christendom out of his misused kingdom."¹⁵⁴ He was sincere and, despite the "dirty mud-slinging"¹⁵⁵ of the Leopoldian press, he emerged with his character untarnished. His honesty made him, in the eyes of his disciples, "the conscience of humanity, especially British humanity."¹⁵⁶

Morel had been able to precipitate the "tidal wave"¹⁵⁷ of British opinion against the Congo State. The sources of his strength were not the diplomatic machinations of the British Foreign Office or the commercial ambitions of the Liverpool merchants. Nor was the Congo reform movement essentially either political or religious. At bottom, the secret to Morel's success was the shared belief of the British public that the Congo reform movement was the last great crusade against slavery. In the words of the Bishop of Exeter: "The natives were living in the Congo in what was virtually a state of slavery, and such as was utterly unparalleled in the history of slavery in any civilized or almost any uncivilized, state, ancient or modern."¹⁵⁸ At the dissolution of the Congo Reform Association in June

¹⁵² Morel surmised this from Johnston's letter to him of Sept. 8, 1908; the quotation is from Morel to Johnston, Sept. 10, 1908, MP.

¹⁵³ *Official Organ*, Nov. 1907.

¹⁵⁴ Casement to Morel, n.d. (1909), MP.

¹⁵⁵ Casement to Morel, n.d., MP.

¹⁵⁶ *The Times*, June 17, 1913.

¹⁵⁷ *Official Organ*, May 1907.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

1913, the Bishop of Winchester said that Britain owed to Morel its success in "freeing the natives of the Congo."¹⁵⁹

Whatever the truth of this assertion, and whatever credit should be given Morel in general, there can be little doubt that the Congo reform movement was a powerful force to be reckoned with by the British government. Morel did not exaggerate when he wrote that it was "a movement which Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Lansdowne, Sir Harry Johnston and other eminent personages have, in varied language, described as the most remarkable British popular movement in the last half century."¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ *The Times*, June 17, 1913.

¹⁶⁰ Unpublished history of the Congo Reform Association, MP.

XI

The United States and the Crisis
of Liberian Independence,
1929-1934

by

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and the other two are the same as in the first case.

Let us now consider the case in which

$$a = b = c = 1.$$

Let us denote by α the angle

$$\alpha = \arccos \frac{1}{2}.$$

IN THE CURRENT WAVE OF ACADEMIC INTEREST in Africa, Liberia has received a good deal less than its fair share of attention. There appears to be a feeling that, like North Africa and the Republic of South Africa, Liberia presents a special case, with a history and development somehow atypical of the continent as a whole. In a certain sense, obviously, this is true: Liberia was never subjected to the political control of a European power; its economic development lagged because there were none of the infusions of capital received by the colonial areas; and its connection with the United States set it apart from other parts of Africa.

Yet, from another point of view, it makes little sense to argue that Liberia is somehow un-African because it is ruled by a group whose background sets it apart from the new rulers of other areas of the continent. It is hard to see how the so-called American-Liberian elite, born and for the most part educated in Africa, with ancestors who have governed the republic for more than a century, is less African than the leaders of other countries, whose attitudes and ideologies were shaped at the Sorbonne, the London School of Economics, or Lincoln University. Indeed, it may be argued that Liberia deserves especially careful study because certain patterns established in that country a century ago now seem to be emerging among its neighbors: the one-party state, the vast gulf between the standards of living and education of rulers and ruled, a certain extravagant emphasis on politics as the preferred career of the educated minority. Even the forced labor whose existence in Liberia so exercised the United States and the League of Nations in the 1930s—and which led to the crisis discussed in this essay—is found in Africa today, under such euphonious names as “human investments.” Perhaps these patterns are not the result of the introduction of a foreign ruling group—the original Liberian settlers saw themselves as returning sons of Africa—but rather of the confrontation of under-developed economies with Western political ideas and

institutions. Investigation of Liberia's history and problems may well provide us with some idea of the future course of Africa.

This essay, though only a modest contribution to the diplomatic history of a small country, may point to two important facts. In the first place, it should be possible to do work in African history strictly with the tools of the historian, using sources easily available even to the less fortunately placed investigator. Much of the history of Africa will, of course, have to be recovered by anthropologists and archaeologists. But historians may be able to make their contribution most effectively by staying within their own field, however frustrating that may be in the case of Africa, and exploiting such documentary materials as do exist. Clearly this does not mean that we should not use the findings of other disciplines. Yet one may doubt that the history of Africa will be served best by historians who become amateur anthropologists and archaeologists.

Second, and more specifically, this account of the major crisis of Liberian independence in this century points to the continued vitality of imperialist attitudes in Europe and the United States in the 1920s. A myth seems to be creeping into some general accounts of African history, to the effect that after 1919 European powers renounced imperialism and began to prepare their colonial peoples for independence. Italy's conquest of Ethiopia is frequently cited as the exception to this rule, owing to the Fascist ideology of Italy's rulers. Liberia's independence, however, was not threatened by Fascist aggressors—rumors in the 1930s of German designs on the republic were baseless—but by the very League of Nations that opposed Italy's proceedings a few years later, and even to some extent by Liberia's stepmother and occasional protectress, the United States. Some of the problems touched upon here, such as the conflict between needs of economic development and those of national independence, and the question to what degree an international body may interfere in the domestic affairs of one of its members in order to make it live up to standards set by that body, may have relevance for understanding the problems of Africa as a whole.

1

On June 5, 1929, the American Department of State transmitted to the Republic of Liberia a note brusquely accusing that govern-

ment of tolerating conditions "hardly distinguishable from organized slave trade,"¹ and demanding that prompt steps be taken to abolish such abuses. This note marked the beginning of an extended crisis for Liberia; the independence of which the United States had been the chief guardian was threatened by that same country, in concert with the European colonial powers.

Several writers who have dealt with the subject, notably Robert E. Anderson and Nnamdi Azikiwe, have yielded to the temptation of seeing in this episode nothing more than a last flagrant manifestation of Dollar Diplomacy, and have painted a simplified moralistic picture of an innocent small country under attack by greedy imperialists. Such an interpretation, however, tends to overlook that American interest in Liberia, in spite of the powerful factor which the Firestone rubber interests had become in that republic since 1926, continued to be strongest in philanthropic and Negro groups. Their concern had been behind the century-old American protective attitude toward Liberia, and they could certainly not be willing now to applaud the end of the country's independence. Secretary of State Henry Stimson, moreover, who had been in charge of America's foreign relations for only a few weeks when the slavery note was sent, was just beginning the job of liquidating the United States's economic protectorates in the Caribbean area. That he should have worked for the establishment of a new colony in faraway Africa would have been inconsistent in the extreme. Finally, such well-meaning enemies of imperialism as Anderson and Azikiwe tend to overlook the scandalous social conditions in Liberia, the government's toleration of an almost grotesque degree of corruption among its officials, and, perhaps most important, the lack of evidence, at least in the beginning stages of the crisis, of other than humanitarian motives for America's diplomatic intervention. Only when the European colonial powers, especially Great Britain, began to clamor for reforms in Liberia did the United States take the lead in demanding foreign intervention to improve social and economic conditions. We shall see that this demand was at least partly calculated to forestall unilateral action by the European powers, a motive easy to understand in view of the consider-

¹ Stimson to Francis, June 25, 1929, telegram, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FR)*, 1929 (Washington, 1945), III, 274-275.

able American interest in the country, both philanthropic and financial.

Both Azikiwe² and Anderson³ have attempted to prove that economic imperialism was at the bottom of that note of June 1929. No basis can be found, however, for their implications that Firestone believed that the shipment of laborers abroad would tend to diminish the labor supply available to his rubber plantations and that this concern motivated him to prompt the State Department to make representations. The plantations' need for labor at the time, before tapping operations began, was quite small,⁴ and Firestone, far from experiencing difficulties in finding workers, was quite optimistic about their availability.⁵

An equally weak explanation, on the other hand, is that the State Department's note, which after all amounted to unusual interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation, reflected a sudden public interest in Liberian conditions, aroused by the publication of several books and articles by apologists for imperialism and by disappointed Liberian politicians.⁶ Of the books usually mentioned, only Reeve's *The Black Republic*⁷ appeared before June 1929. It is difficult to see why this work, which deals with Liberian conditions only up to 1922, should suddenly be the cause for diplomatic intervention seven years later. Buell's volume, *The Native Problem in Africa*,⁸ although published in 1928, was not designed, in view of its sympathetic attitude toward Liberia, to arouse the ire of the State Department. Lady Simon's *Slavery*,⁹ in which she calls for the administration of the West African republic by "some capable and warm-hearted white administrators,"¹⁰ was not published until November 1929 and makes reference to the American note. And

² Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Liberia in World Politics* (London, 1934), 184-187, 207.

³ Robert E. Anderson, *Liberia, America's African Friend* (Chapel Hill, 1952), 96-103.

⁴ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, July 1932, 364.

⁵ Raymond Leslie Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York, 1928), 833.

⁶ Anderson, *Liberia*, 185; Azikiwe, *Liberia*, 184.

⁷ Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Black Republic* (London, 1923).

⁸ Buell, *Native Problem*, *passim*.

⁹ Lady Kathleen Simon, *Slavery* (London, 1929).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

Thomas J. Faulkner, the defeated presidential candidate of Liberia's People's Party, did not give his first interview to the American press until July 20, 1929,¹¹ significantly to a Negro newspaper, the *Baltimore Afro-American*. In the note itself, reference is made only to the "confidential report submitted by Dr. Patton [the American bishop of the Liberian Episcopal Church] to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church and your [the American minister in Monrovia] confidential telegram to Mr. Castle of April 20."¹² That the State Department should take action merely upon these reports is more easily explained when we bear in mind that charges of slavery had been made against Liberia for some years, especially before the League of Nations Committee which in 1925 drew up the Anti-slavery Convention.¹³

Liberia's reply to the accusation made against it was prompt and decisive. A note of June 13 categorically denied the charges and suggested an investigation by a competent, impartial commission.¹⁴ The United States, accepting the suggestion, proposed that such a commission be composed of one Liberian, one American, and one member appointed by the League of Nations;¹⁵ Liberia immediately acceded.¹⁶ Throughout the negotiations leading to the eventual appointment of the commission (here referred to as the Christy Commission) and to the drafting of its terms of reference, the United States kept Liberia under constant pressure. In several communications the minister in Monrovia emphasized the necessity for such prodding and reported that the Liberian government was desperately trying to find a way out of the situation created by President King's call for the investigation, which the State Department was inclined to consider a bluff.¹⁷

Meanwhile, one of the practices complained against in the

¹¹ Stimson to Wharton, July 23, 1929, tel., *FR*, 1929, III, 288.

¹² Stimson to Francis, June 25, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 274. William R. Castle, Jr., was U.S. under-secretary of state.

¹³ See *Report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the Existence of Slavery and Forced Labor in Liberia* (Christy Report) (Washington, 1931), 3-4.

¹⁴ Francis to Stimson, June 13, 1929, tel., *FR*, 1929, III, 279.

¹⁵ Stimson to Francis, June 22, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 283.

¹⁶ Wharton to Stimson, July 4, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 286.

¹⁷ Wharton to Stimson, July 26, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 292.

American note continued: the forced shipment of laborers to the Spanish island of Fernando Po.¹⁸ Thus it smacks of an international double standard that the State Department on July 19, 1929, instructed its minister in Madrid to inform the Spanish government that "this Government has no thought of suggesting that the Spanish Government or the Spanish authorities in Fernando Po had any knowledge of the conditions in Liberia which have been made the subject of this correspondence."¹⁹ At the same time, Liberia was admonished to effect a "material alteration or radical change in interpretation of the present agreement with Spain."²⁰

The terms of reference for the international commission, as finally agreed upon in September, empowered it to ascertain

(a) whether slavery as defined in the anti-slavery convention [which Liberia ratified on November 13, 1929] exists in the Republic;

(b) whether this system is participated in or encouraged by the Government of the Republic;

(c) whether and what leading citizens of the country participate therein;

and also to inquire into the extent and conditions under which forced labor was used in the republic, "whether for public or private purposes," and how it was recruited; into conditions of recruitment and shipment of labor to Fernando Po and other foreign territories; and into charges that the Liberian Frontier Force, the country's combined army and gendarmerie, had been used in the forcible recruitment of labor.²¹ A further clause was inserted, possibly as a delaying tactic at the insistence of the Liberian government,²² requiring the commission to ascertain "whether the labor employed for private purposes on privately owned and leased [the original Liberian draft reads "the Firestone"²³] plantations is recruited by voluntary enlistments or is forcibly impressed for this service by the Liberian Government or by its authority."²⁴

The choice of a League member for the proposed international

¹⁸ Cotton to Wharton, Aug. 3, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 293.

¹⁹ Clark to Hammond, June 19, 1929, *ibid.*, 282.

²⁰ Stimson to Francis, June 5, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 274.

²¹ Christy Report, 7.

²² Wharton to Stimson, Aug. 1, 1929, tel., *FR*, 1929, III, 293.

²³ Wharton to Stimson, July 24, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 289.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

commission was obviously an important and difficult decision. The American minister in Switzerland was realistic enough to question the wisdom of appointing a citizen of a country with colonial possessions,²⁵ although the State Department had "no national preference except that the League nominee should not be a national of a country likely to import labor from Liberia." The person finally chosen, Sigvald Meek of Norway, seemed eminently qualified by either criterion. But he rejected his appointment in January 1930 on the grounds that there would not be sufficient time to do field work between the commission's arrival in Liberia in March and the onset of the rainy season in May.²⁶ Meek's place was hurriedly filled by Cuthbert Christy, who was not well qualified on either count. Christy was a medical expert who had also had administrative experience in many parts of the British Empire. His colleagues on the commission were Charles S. Johnson of Fisk University, a well-known Negro sociologist, and ex-President Arthur Barclay of Liberia. An impartial observer would have to concede that the commission's members were technically qualified to make the inquiry.²⁷ The fact that its findings and recommendations were arrived at unanimously would tend to contradict the argument that they were the result of nationalist bias.

In spite of the constant fears of the American representative in Monrovia that the Liberian government, "seriously alarmed over the possible outcome and effect of investigation would gladly seize upon any pretext to prolong discussion to the point where investigation might fail of its purpose,"²⁸ the Liberians continued their policy of full cooperation. The delay in constituting the commission had largely been due to slow League action in naming its representative. As soon as the American and League members arrived in Monrovia in March 1930, the International Commission of Inquiry was formally constituted by President Charles D. B. King. It began its work in early April, holding hearings in various parts of the country.²⁹ The American chargé d'affaires in Monrovia was instructed to avoid scrupulously any appearance of influencing the work of the

²⁵ Wilson to Stimson, Aug. 17, 1929, tel., *ibid.*, 300.

²⁶ Carter to Stimson, Jan. 30, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 339.

²⁷ Cf. the contrary view in Azikiwe, *Liberia*, 190.

²⁸ Carter to Stimson, Jan. 30, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 338.

²⁹ Christy Report, 5.

international group, and particularly to abstain from participating in any of its hearings.³⁰

The report of the International Commission, handed to the Liberian president on September 8, included in its preliminary remarks two significant admissions: it contained "a good deal which might be considered an unwarranted extension of the Commission's limits of inquiry" and, further, "the Commission has found difficulty in disentangling evidence of fundamental economic and social conditions from an extravagant emphasis upon politics in the Republic, an emphasis accentuated by the nearness of the presidential election, with numerous factions active."³¹ This is clearly a reference to the activities of Faulkner's People's Party, which used the commission's hearings to further its political aims by intentionally discrediting the Liberian administration and stirring up the natives with rumors that they need no longer obey the local officials, since the White Man had come to take over the country.³²

Much of the commission's report did not deal with slavery in any sense, but with the maladministration of native affairs by Liberian officials, which, coupled with the naiveté of the natives, produced some shocking cases of extortion and tended to make a farce of any principle of justice. Yet this had little to do with the commission's terms of reference, except insofar as the systematic extortion practiced by some local officials tended to force the chiefs to supply laborers, for whom they received a certain sum as head money to pay illegal "fines." These laborers were then shipped to the Spanish and French possessions in West Africa by recruiting firms from which many high government officials, including the vice-president of the republic, derived considerable profit. The commission pointed out that by this system the actual burden of using force to provide contract labor was thrown upon the local chiefs.³³ Vice-President Yancy, however, was also accused of having occasionally used the Frontier Force for slave-raiding expeditions.

The commission's report went on to state that the compulsory labor system had serious flaws; it had been established in Liberia's

³⁰ Cotton to Carter, April 3, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 344.

³¹ Christy Report, 10.

³² Carter to Stimson, April 3, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 344.

³³ Christy Report, 37.

earliest days, and under it roads and other public works were built by natives who worked for a given length of time in lieu of taxes. Such labor was "wastefully recruited and used frequently under conditions involving systematic intimidation and ill-treatment on the part of government officials, messengers and Frontier Force soldiers." Some of the laborers had also been diverted to nonpublic work. Liberia was absolved of the charge that "classic slavery," in the sense of slave markets and systematic buying and selling of human beings, existed in the country. Domestic slavery was found to exist among the natives, despite the antislavery clause of the Liberian constitution, although it was discouraged by the government, whose courts had occasionally granted writs of *habeas corpus* to free slaves who had been badly treated. The system of pawning human beings, common along Africa's west coast,³⁴ also was found to flourish in Liberia, and some leading citizens supposedly participated in it under the guise of taking native "apprentices." The Firestone plantations were given a clean bill of health. The investigators found "no evidence that the Firestone Plantations Company consciously employs any but voluntary labor on its leased rubber plantation," and that "all the company's laborers are free to terminate their employment at will."³⁵

The commission's "suggestions and recommendations" undoubtedly went far beyond the agreed terms of reference in an effort to strike at the roots of the revealed evils. They called for an end to the "closed door" policy that the Liberian government had long followed with respect to the hinterland—even Liberian citizens from the coastal area were forbidden to enter the inland districts without special permission—and advocated the systematic opening of the interior to trade and civilization. The government's attention was called to the task of providing an adequate system of education³⁶ and to the necessity of changing its suppressive native policy by taking steps to restore the power of the chiefs over their tribes. With notable inconsistency, the commission also advocated, almost in the

³⁴ Buell, *Native Problem*, 750ff.

³⁵ Christy Report, 33-35.

³⁶ See Buell, *Native Problem*, 757; Liberia already had spent a larger proportion of its budget on education than had the neighboring British colony of Sierra Leone.

same breath, measures to end the division of natives and civilized persons. Pawning and domestic slavery were to be made definitely illegal. The shipment of laborers to Fernando Po was to be discontinued, considering the unsatisfactory working conditions on that island and the abuses to which recruitment of contract labor had led; the Frontier Force was to be reformed, especially with a view to establishing better discipline; and the immigration of Negroes from the United States was to be encouraged. The report also advocated, somewhat inconsistently in view of its recommendation of opening up the hinterland, the curtailing of the road program and of the labor levies required for it.

To accomplish these reforms, the commission thought it necessary to reorganize the country's administrative divisions and to appoint European or American officials to supervise them. Any hope of improving conditions without such outside help was categorically declared futile. The commission added the somewhat baffling sentence: "Mere advance to greater honesty and efficiency will not be sufficient." The report marked the beginning of an insistence on assuming Liberia's reform program that characterized American and European relations with that country for several years.³⁷

2

The commission's findings made a considerable impression everywhere. President King expressed his mortification and promised prompt action along the suggested lines.³⁸ Domestic servitude and pawning were declared illegal by presidential proclamation.³⁹ The American representative in Monrovia felt that King was ready to introduce reforms; however, such efforts would be met with "tremendous opposition from almost all other political factions," and Secretary of State Edwin Barclay was thought especially likely to create trouble.⁴⁰

King was indeed treading on thin ice. A newly formed citizens' league, as well as Faulkner's adherents, demanded his resignation and total reform of the government. The league was, however,

³⁷ Christy Report, 137-146.

³⁸ Reber to Stimson, Sept. 11, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 350-351.

³⁹ Reber to Stimson, Oct. 3, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 356.

⁴⁰ Reber to Stimson, Sept. 21, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 51.

opposed to the introduction of new white officials in addition to the ones already in the country under the Firestone loan agreement of 1926, and felt that the "punishing of the leading offenders who are named in the report and the establishing of a new government will prove the Liberian people's good faith."⁴¹ President King was alarmed at the possibility of rioting, and a British war vessel kept up steam in Freetown to intervene, if necessary, for the safety of foreigners.⁴²

King's precarious position was not made easier by Secretary of State Stimson, who on November 3, 1930, addressed a note to Liberia declaring himself "profoundly shocked" at the commission's findings and demanding "nothing short of complete reforms, sincerely achieved" to "satisfy world-wide demand for positive action." On November 17, after receiving reports from Liberia (later proved to be without foundation) which charged that the government had taken reprisals against natives who had testified before the International Commission, Stimson waxed even sharper—he threatened the "final alienation of the friendly feelings which the American Government and people have entertained for Liberia since its establishment nearly a century ago."⁴³

Stimson undoubtedly expressed American opinion at the time. It is remarkable that the Negro press was particularly vocal in denouncing Liberian conditions and in demanding reforms.⁴⁴ Most magazines and newspapers echoed the *New York Telegram*, which felt that Stimson "had earned the lasting gratitude of all civilized peoples and of the black slaves of Africa by his ultimatum to the American Protectorate of Liberia." Still a few, such as the *Norfolk Virginian*, were thoughtful enough to point out that Liberia was not the only country guilty of maltreating its natives: "Great Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands are not to be address with scathing notes. Liberia, being, so to speak, a protégé of ours, and insignificant to boot, can be upbraided without serious embarrassment."⁴⁵

⁴¹ Reber to Stimson, Oct. 13, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 361.

⁴² Reber to Stimson, Oct. 20, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 363.

⁴³ Dept. of State to Liberian Consulate General, Baltimore, *ibid.*, 371.

⁴⁴ Azikiwe, *Liberia*, 207-208.

⁴⁵ Both quotations are from "Liberia Warned to Clean Up Slavery," *Literary Digest*, CVIII (Jan. 24, 1931), 11.

Feeling that King had gone too far in committing himself to acceptance of the International Commission's recommendations, the Liberian legislature requested that he resign, threatening to impeach him if he refused. The legislature wanted to introduce reforms, without accepting any new white officials.⁴⁶ On December 3, 1930, both King and Vice-President Yancy resigned, and the Secretary of State, Barclay, according to the provisions of the Liberian constitution, succeeded to the presidency. At the same time, a number of members of the legislature and other high officials, including the present chief executive of Liberia, W. V. S. Tubman, were removed from office for their part in the irregularities uncovered by the Christy Commission.⁴⁷

The American government, once informed by its chargé in Monrovia, Samuel R. Reber, that Barclay was "openly anti-white and opposed to the International Commission's recommendations,"⁴⁸ declined to recognize his administration, informing him that "the United States Government would be more disposed to acceptance of the present situation were it promptly to receive a declaration to the effect that President King's successor accepted the International Commission's report, intended to carry it out in full, and forthwith would create the necessary machinery to execute it."⁴⁹ This important note was sent after the Liberian government had called the State Department's attention to its own reform scheme, which included provision for two white commissioners to reform the hinterland administration and had pointed out that steps had already been taken to punish delinquent officials.⁵⁰ The American position was an absolute refusal even to consider partial compliance with the Christy Commission's report. Even when Liberia requested American aid (which had been offered in the note of November 17) to carry out her own reforms, the State Department refused to acknowledge the communication.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Reber to Stimson, Nov. 29, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 376-377.

⁴⁷ Azikiwe, *Liberia*, 204.

⁴⁸ Reber to Stimson, Dec. 30, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 379.

⁴⁹ Stimson to Reber, Dec. 5, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 381.

⁵⁰ Coleman to Reber, Dec. 5, 1930, *ibid.*, 382; Reber to Stimson, Dec. 13, 1930, tel., *ibid.*, 386.

⁵¹ Stimson to Reber, Dec. 20, 1930, tel., Reber to Stimson, Dec. 22, 1930, tel., Coleman to Reber, Dec. 23, 1930; *ibid.*, 388-390.

The United States's view of the Liberian problem was clearly expressed in a State Department memorandum dated December 27, 1930. It took cognizance of the possibility "that the American Government may be faced with a strong demand of certain racial groups, philanthropic organizations *and others* in favor of positive action [*italics added*]" and called for the "substitution of external for Liberian control."⁵² It did not, however, advocate that the United States act alone in establishing such control, lest this arouse suspicions of imperialism in Europe and South America, and "no compensating gain, in profit or in prestige would accrue to the United States if it took over Liberia." Instead the United States ought to "consider the Liberian situation as an international question, and if necessary to cooperate, but not to accept exclusive responsibility, in its solution." The memorandum then suggested American participation in an international control body formed on the basis of the 1926 League of Nations antislavery convention, of which the United States was a signatory.

The "others" referred to in the memorandum as likely to demand foreign intervention in Liberia were, of course, the Firestone interests. In a conversation with Secretary Stimson on December 10, 1930,⁵³ Harvey Firestone expressed his belief that "the Liberian people were unable to handle their own affairs; that they must be controlled; that they were sinking down and down and there was nothing but anarchy ahead of them. He said the responsibility was always recognized to be ours and the time would probably come when Barkley [*sic*] would make a proposal of compromise and he hoped we would not accept it." But Stimson told the industrialist that he "saw no likelihood of the American Government willing to assume responsibility in Liberia across the Atlantic; that I [Stimson] thought that it would have to be eventually handled by the League of Nations with such advice or help as we can give them, whatever that may be."

It is just possible that Firestone's sudden concern for the welfare of Liberians was occasioned by the impact that the world depression was beginning to have on Liberia, and by the consequent diffi-

⁵² Memo by E. O. Briggs, Dec. 27, 1930, *ibid.*, 391-392.

⁵³ Stimson, *Memoranda of Conversations*, Stimson Papers (SP), part XV, misc. no. 2, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University.

culty in making interest payments on the loan that Firestone had extended to the country in 1926. In April 1930, even before the slavery problem had been brought into the open by the Christy Commission, the chargé in Monrovia had suggested to the State Department "the advisability of a temporary friendly intervention" for just that reason.⁵⁴ From late 1930 on, Firestone continued to press for unilateral American action; yet the government's policy was one of international cooperation in the solution of the problem. It is probably reasonable to criticize this policy on the grounds that it refused to admit the possibility that conditions in Liberia could be bettered by the Liberians themselves, with friendly assistance from (but not domination by) the United States. Still this cannot be called imperialistic in the usual sense of the word: the United States government very definitely was not trying to extend its economic or political power at the expense of the small West African republic.

3

Reference has already been made to the influence of European powers in shaping American policy toward Liberia. The British government in particular had for some time manifested considerable interest in Liberian developments. In October 1930, its ambassador in Washington queried the State Department about the American attitude toward international control over Liberia.⁵⁵ In a conversation between him and Secretary Stimson on January 6, 1931, both agreed that such control, exercised by the signatories of the 1926 antislavery convention, would be desirable. They did not expect force to be required for the imposition of this control.⁵⁶ As a result of the positive American reaction to these overtures, the British representative in Monrovia was instructed to notify the Liberian government that "in the circumstances, the only thing for Liberia to do was to request the League for an international Commission of Control *to take over the country* and that if Liberia were unwilling to do this, Great Britain would view it with grave concern and

⁵⁴ Carter to Stimson, April 25, 1930, tel., *FR*, 1930, III, 395.

⁵⁵ Memo by Briggs, Dec. 27, 1930, *ibid.*, 393.

⁵⁶ Memo by Marriner of a conversation between Stimson and Lindsay, Jan. 6, 1931, *FR*, 1931, II, 653.

it would imperil the friendly relations existing between the two countries [*italics added*].”⁵⁷

Under the shadow of these clouds gathering over its independence, Liberia on January 6, 1931, accepted, in principle, the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.⁵⁸ The United States, however, considered this declaration unsatisfactory and requested the other powers represented in Monrovia to join in putting pressure on the Liberian government.⁵⁹ Accordingly “strong representations” were made jointly by the British, German, and American envoys, with the objective of getting Liberia to make a “voluntary request” for League of Nations assistance.⁶⁰ President Barclay, faced by this imposing display of diplomatic power, promised to do so, but he refused to compromise Liberia’s independence:

In respect to the suggestion that the Government of Liberia should be committed for a time to an international governing commission, the President of Liberia is compelled to observe that the acceptance thereof would not only be in violation of the constitution of the Republic, but would also be tantamount to surrender of its sovereignty and autonomy. This course of action the President and Government of the Republic are without authority to take and it is not believed that the traditional friends of Liberia, the powers to whom this note is addressed, would intentionally insist upon it.⁶¹

Barclay had taken a clear position: from now on he never deviated from it, and Liberia’s representatives at the League of Nations defended it, not without dignity.

Liberia, as a result of foreign pressure, thus asked the League for assistance in the solution of its difficulties. The great powers continued to insist on an international protectorate, using the Liberian request for assistance as a pretext. This design was betrayed by Under-Secretary of State Castle, when in a conversation with the French counselor of embassy he “made Mr. Henry understand that we knew just as well as the French Government knew that any pressure brought on Liberia must appear to be as a result of the

⁵⁷ Memo by Marriner of conversation with Lindsay, Jan. 14, 1931, *ibid.*, 658.

⁵⁸ Reber to Stimson, Jan. 6, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 653.

⁵⁹ Stimson to Reber, Jan. 16, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 659-660.

⁶⁰ Reber to Stimson, Jan. 21, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 661.

⁶¹ Reber to Stimson, Jan. 23, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 667.

request of the Liberian Government for assistance.”⁶² In spite of this, however, the motives for establishing control over Liberia, at least as openly professed, were still humanitarian. The familiar formula, “protection of foreign property,” was conspicuously lacking in the diplomatic communications between the United States and the European powers.

On January 24, 1931, the League Council decided to deal with the Liberian request through a committee consisting of representatives from France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Poland, Venezuela, and Liberia. The United States was invited to participate in its work, and Samuel Reber, the bitterly anti-Liberian chargé d'affaires in Monrovia, was sent to Geneva as America's representative.⁶³ The composition of the committee, of which Christy was named chairman, boded ill for Liberia. Of the powers represented, five had African interests, if we include Germany, which during those years had the lion's share of Liberia's trade; the American representative could be counted upon to support any plan that would curtail the republic's independence, in view of his government's declaration that it felt that in international control “lies the only hope for Liberia's future.”⁶⁴ Liberian arguments that the request for advice and assistance did not express a desire for foreign control were supported only by Venezuela and later by Panama, both countries having had firsthand experience of the blessings of such control. After 1932 the new government of Spain made the most of its representative's opportunity to lambaste capitalism and imperialism.⁶⁵

The committee, instead of proceeding on the basis of the Christy report, decided to send a new investigating group to Liberia to ascertain what measures should be taken, a step not overly pleasing to the United States, which wanted quick action.⁶⁶ The composition of the subcommittee reflected the majority of the parent body. The

⁶² Memo by Castle of conversation between Stimson and Henry, Feb. 24, 1931, *ibid.*, 674.

⁶³ Gilbert to Stimson, Jan. 24, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 668; Stimson to Reber, Jan. 26, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 669; Wilson to Stimson, Jan. 31, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 669-670; Stimson to Wilson, Feb. 2, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 671.

⁶⁴ Stimson to Wall, Feb. 20, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 673.

⁶⁵ Gilbert to Stimson, Feb. 6, 1932, tel., *FR*, 1932, II, 700.

⁶⁶ Stimson to Dawes, Feb. 28, 1931, tel., *FR*, 1931, II, 678.

Frenchman Charles Brunot, a former governor of the Chad Territory, was named chairman. The committee's financial expert was a Dutchman, Theodorus Ligthart and its medical specialist, Melville McKenzie, came from Britain. One is tempted to suspect that their professional backgrounds in the colonial service of European states made it difficult for them to be sympathetic or even wholly objective in their report, which formed the basis of the League's plan of assistance.

Meanwhile, on May 6, 1932, Edwin Barclay had been returned as president of Liberia in an election described as comparatively orderly and honest for that country. The United States, while continuing its official refusal to recognize him, for no other reason than that he refused to cooperate in putting his country into the hands of foreign administrators, had sent a new Negro minister, Charles E. Mitchell, to Liberia, and his attitude stood in sharp contrast to that of his white predecessor, Reber. In his first report Mitchell stressed Barclay's determination to introduce reforms and the progress that had already been made, especially in the field of sanitation. He advocated recognition of Barclay, and his remark that "Liberia deserves pity rather than censure"⁶⁷ was a clear reproach to the State Department's intransigent policy.

The Brunot Committee spent only a little over a month in Liberia (June 16-July 24). The question comes to mind whether such a period was indeed sufficient to make a thorough study of the country's needs, or whether the committee's members were content with finding some supporting evidence for their preconceived ideas. Many of the findings and recommendations followed those of the Christy Report, especially the sections dealing with interior administration and native policy. The principle of indirect administration through freely elected paramount chiefs was recommended for adoption, and the authority of the white administrators called for in the Christy Report was now to be extended to the sea coast as well, thus bringing the entire country under their control. The financial position of the country was termed "tragic," owing to the world depression and reduced employment in the Firestone plantations,

⁶⁷ Mitchell to Stimson, May 6, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 684.

⁶⁸ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, July 1932, 1386-1397.

⁶⁹ Belden to Dennis and McCaskey, June 3, 1932, *FR*, 1932, II, 735.

the country's only major enterprise. Government officials were no longer paid. Since under the terms of the 1926 agreement Liberia was forbidden to contract any new debts,⁶⁸ a renegotiation of that agreement was considered necessary so that money could be made available on better terms and, further, so that Liberia could obtain the second installment of the five-million-dollar loan of 1926, whose payment Firestone made dependent upon conditions which the committee considered "impossible." It was also pointed out that no interest or sinking-fund payments could be made for 1931. To improve the government's fiscal position, the introduction of export duties on coffee and rubber was recommended by the experts, who apparently were oblivious to the prohibition of duties on rubber under the Firestone agreement. Through such measures the committee hoped to increase Liberia's revenues, which in 1931 amounted to only \$482,000 (against expenditures of \$702,000),⁶⁹ to \$650,000. Its reform plan would cost \$398,000 a year, with the larger part of this sum to be spent for salaries for twenty foreign officials. This was termed "practical assistance," which, unlike mere advice, could best help Liberia!⁷⁰

It is not surprising, in view of such proposals, that Liberia made another attempt to settle its difficulties through a bilateral agreement with the United States and to obtain help from that source.⁷¹ Again the request was rebuffed, to the apparent distress of the American minister in Monrovia,⁷² who continued in the unusual position of having to deal with a government that his country officially refused to recognize.

4

The latter half of 1931 brought no new developments in the Liberian crisis. The full Liberian Committee of the League, which was to consider the report of the Brunot group and recommend action, did not meet until the following January. Mitchell reported from Monrovia that Barclay was ready to make any effort "as far as practicable" to meet the international desire for reform so that his

⁷⁰ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, 1932, 1364-1368.

⁷¹ Mitchell to Stimson, Oct. 3, 1931, tel., *FR*, 1931, II, 693.

⁷² Mitchell to Stimson, Oct. 31, 1931, *ibid.*, 695.

country might receive some international aid.⁷³ The slavery and related charges receded into the background, and new accusations against Barclay of systematic suppression of the natives, particularly on the Kru coast, in retaliation for their testimony before the Christy and Brunot commissions,⁷⁴ proved largely groundless;⁷⁵ hence the economic side of the American concern with Liberia became the dominant factor in the relations between the two countries. The Department of State persisted in its inflexible position of wishing to impose an international protectorate upon the republic, motivated by the typically colonialist attitude that efficiency and progress are unquestionably to be valued more highly than national independence. At the same time, the Hoover administration was definitely not prepared to give real material assistance. Again, however, we must note the cooperation of the United States with the League of Nations and the rejection of all suggestions, continually brought forward by the Firestone interests, to act unilaterally. This refusal to repeat the mistakes of Dollar Diplomacy was gradually to lead to open conflict between the State Department and the rubber baron, who in view of the peculiar nature of his agreements with the Liberian government was able to negotiate on the Liberian question almost like a sovereign power, independent of the American government's policy.

At the January 1932 meeting of the Liberian Committee in Geneva, the Firestone interests were represented by their own delegate, a Mr. Howe of the Finance Company of America. Their reform plan went much further in its provisions for actual foreign control over Liberian affairs than the Brunot Committee's had. The State Department favored it: "In view of experience with advisorships in the past, the Department is in entire sympathy [with the Firestone plan] and feels moreover, that unless complete executive and administrative control is granted for a period of ten years, no genuine reforms or rehabilitation could be achieved."⁷⁶ At the same time, however, the State Department was trying to dissuade Firestone

⁷³ Mitchell to Stimson, Nov. 24, 1931, *ibid.*, 696.

⁷⁴ Mitchell to Stimson, Dec. 9, 1931, tel., *ibid.*, 696.

⁷⁵ Mitchell to Stimson, March 9, 1932, tel., *FR*, 1932, II, 712; memo by Reber, Jan. 30, 1932, *ibid.*, 705-707.

⁷⁶ Stimson to Gilbert, Jan. 3, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 687.

from demanding that the commissioner general, who under his plan would assume virtually dictatorial powers over Liberia, be an American citizen.⁷⁷ This question, as we shall see, developed into a major controversy some time later.

If Firestone considered the Brunot proposals too easy on Liberia, that country thought them excessively harsh. President Barclay declared that the report exceeded the committee's powers and that its recommendations could not be squared with the Liberian constitution. The American representative in Geneva, on the other hand, complained that many committee members "felt and expressed the opinion privately that if Liberia did not wish to accept the League's plan when concluded, there would be no method of compelling it to do so," and added that in his opinion nothing but force could gain Liberia's acceptance.⁷⁸ The committee eventually deferred action on the Brunot plan to allow Liberia time to present its counter-proposals.

Reference has already been made several times to charges that the Barclay administration was guilty of the cruel suppression of its natives, particularly on the Kru coast. The League committee protested such alleged abuses, which the Liberian government denied with the explicit assurance that no action would be taken against the Kru tribes as long as they refrained from attacks upon other tribes and from threats against foreign interests.⁷⁹ Investigations undertaken by the British consul in Monrovia, Douglas G. Rydings, under joint British-American sponsorship, and concurrently by a Liberian government commission headed by Winthrop A. Travell, an American loan official, exonerated the Liberian authorities of the charges, stating that such reports had been produced by propagandists living in Monrovia. The tribes had been incited to rebellion by "propaganda stirred up by Americo-Liberians and natives to the effect that the whites were coming to take over the country." Rydings' report also took notice "of the fact that some of the natives

⁷⁷ Stimson to Gilbert, Jan. 20, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 693.

⁷⁸ Reber to Stimson, Feb. 8, 1932, *ibid.*, 703.

⁷⁹ British Embassy to Dept. of State, aide memoire, Feb. 19, 1932, *ibid.*, 707; Stimson to Lindsay, March 2, 1932, Stimson to Mitchell, March 4, 1932, tel.; *ibid.*, 708-712.

were [apparent omission] in their acclaim for British rule.”⁸⁰ Later that summer the League of Nations sent Dr. McKenzie to adjust the difficulties between the Kru and the government in Monrovia. His report supported the findings of Travell and Rydings in pointing to antigovernment propaganda and close connections “between the dissident Kru in Liberia and those in adjacent colonies” as causes for the disorder. It absolved the government of charges of retaliation against witnesses before the previous League inquiries. Also, perhaps unintentionally, it defended Liberian native policy:

The only possible means of governing these tribes, if few Government Commissioners are available, is by supporting a strong Paramount Chief over several tribes and holding him responsible for the maintenance of order, at the same time giving him such government assistance as he may require, making it clear to the dissident tribes that the government forces are ready to support the Paramount Chief.⁸¹

Previously Monrovia had been condemned for exactly this policy of indirect pressure and for supporting “unpopular” paramount chiefs. McKenzie made peace on the Kru coast by taking from the supposedly peaceful and unarmed victims of government suppression over five hundred firearms. At the same time, the Frontier Force was severely limited in its freedom of action. McKenzie, who had arrived in Liberia aboard a British cruiser, a manner hardly designed to underline his friendly intentions, nevertheless had occasion to thank the Liberian government for its “excellent cooperation.”⁸²

The Liberian government had already forwarded its reform plan to Geneva on May 12, 1932.⁸³ It laid particular stress on the development of education in the country, a field largely neglected by the Brunot plan since few funds would have been available for it after paying the expenses of hiring a large number of foreign administrators. It also stressed that Liberia did not want the second installment of the Firestone loan unless the Finance Corporation of America, the Firestone subsidiary through which the loan was administered, agreed to improve its terms.

⁸⁰ Mitchell to Castle, April 20, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 714.

⁸¹ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Dec. 1932, 2040.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 2037-2041.

⁸³ Gilbert to Castle, May 2, 1932, tel., *FR*, 1932, II, 716-717.

The League committee now worked out a compromise plan that cut the cost of administrative assistance to \$200,000 per year; but it did not go far enough for the American State Department, which suggested further reduction of this sum and insisted upon tighter controls over the Liberian government. In a note of May 8 it declared that "arguments about 'sovereignty' and 'constitutionality' should not be permitted to stand in the way of foreign authority in Liberia"⁸⁴—surely a remarkable statement for a country that refused to join the League for many of the same reasons. From this point of view, Reber, now in Geneva, considered the draft plan of assistance, as adopted by the League committee on May 17, "thoroughly unworkable and impractical." The Liberian government, however, still thought that the plan went too far in undermining local authority; on May 26 it again appealed to the United States for aid in carrying out its own reform scheme.⁸⁵ Its request was not even acknowledged.

At the same time, however, the State Department also declined to use its influence to get Liberia to accept the League's plan,⁸⁶ which it considered too expensive and unsatisfactory in the amount of authority it gave to foreign officials. It continued to advocate an "administration under one man's leadership with a very flexible scope of work." This plan, amounting to a temporary dictatorship under a white official, was forwarded to the minister in Monrovia on June 18,⁸⁷ with instructions to communicate it to Barclay. That the American government was well aware of how its plan would be regarded by public opinion in America and abroad is shown by its warning to the minister that "no memorandum or other record should be left by you. If your Secretary has any knowledge of this message, you should warn him that he must say nothing about it to anyone." Barclay was apparently convinced at last that the United States was not willing to offer his country conditions for cooperation which would be more tolerable than those of the League. Consequently he offered a counterproposal, which consisted of the League's plan supplemented by an American chief adviser, in the

⁸⁴ Phillips to Castle, May 8, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 723.

⁸⁵ Mitchell to Stimson, May 27, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 732.

⁸⁶ Memo by Boal, June 16, 1932, *ibid.*, 737.

⁸⁷ Stimson to Mitchell, June 18, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 739.

framework of the Liberian governmental structure, as minister without portfolio.⁸⁸ A joint resolution of the Liberian legislature approved this plan; but it was rejected by the United States on the grounds that it still did not make provision for sufficient foreign controls.⁸⁹

To emphasize its insistence on more authority for the foreign officials, the State Department advised the Firestone interests not to send a representative to the September meeting of the League committee. Firestone himself was only too happy to follow this advice, which accorded with his own inclinations, and he declined the invitation.⁹⁰ The League committee on Liberia proved not unwilling to accept the American demand for a chief adviser with broad powers, but it definitely objected to a United States citizen in that position: "To place an American at the head of the plan of reform would be to give him the power of arbiter between an American concern and the Liberian government and would amount to the practical administration of the country being centered in American hands."⁹¹ The State Department's position on the question was none too clear. In an exchange of letters between Lord Cecil for the League, Lord Simon for Britain, and Secretary Stimson for the United States, the latter declared that his government would not make an issue of the nationality of the chief adviser but thought that the decision was up to Firestone, "the only major center of civilization in an undisciplined region, which tends without outside pressure to revert to chaos."⁹²

Thus when the League's revised plan of assistance was adopted by the League committee and by Liberia on September 27, 1932, everything hinged on Firestone's willingness to give up his demand for an American chief adviser and to make concessions in rewriting the loan agreement of 1926. The State Department urged him to do so on October 5,⁹³ but Firestone, claiming that the powers of the adviser were insufficient and insisting upon an American citizen for

⁸⁸ Mitchell to Stimson, June 24, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 742-743.

⁸⁹ Dept. of State to British Embassy, memo, Aug. 27, 1932, *ibid.*, 749.

⁹⁰ B. M. Robinson to Stimson, Sept. 2, 1932, *ibid.*, 752.

⁹¹ Wilson to Stimson, Sept. 22, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 757.

⁹² Stimson to Gibson, Sept. 25, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 758-759.

⁹³ Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 7, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 768.

that post, again rejected the plan. His strenuous insistence on his views finally created a rift with the Department, which on October 11 "informed Mr. Firestone that the decision rested with him, but that in the event he persisted in his decision the responsibility therefore to public opinion both in this country and abroad must likewise be assumed by Mr. Firestone."⁹⁴ Washington refused to transmit the Finance Corporation's letter of October 8 to the international committee in Geneva and informed Firestone that, if this letter represented his final position, the League would simply be informed that he refused to negotiate.⁹⁵

Now understanding that the government would not back him indefinitely in his extravagant demands, Firestone went to Washington, and in a conference with the State Department declared his willingness to send a representative to Geneva to work out an arrangement for fitting his loan agreement with the Liberians into the framework of the League's plan of assistance.⁹⁶ The committee was advised of this decision, and the Liberian secretary of the treasury stayed in Geneva to be on hand for the negotiations with the corporation. Firestone, however, apparently had undergone another change of mind. Instead of cooperating with the League, he sent a representative to Monrovia to deal directly with the Liberian government.⁹⁷ Obviously he felt that his corporation's position would be weakened if the League came in to control the country, and he now made an attempt to work out an arrangement more favorable to his interests.

Again the State Department backed Firestone, whose excuse that certain details would first have to be worked out with the Liberians before negotiations with the committee could be fruitful was flimsy at best; there was no reason why these preliminary talks could not have been held in Geneva. The deferential attitude of the outgoing Hoover administration toward Big Business is clearly recognizable in a State Department official's reply to representations of the British ambassador, who suggested that the American government

⁹⁴ Stimson, memo, "Liberia," 19, SP (filed with various memoranda on "Western Europe," uncatalogued).

⁹⁵ Castle to Harvey Firestone, Oct. 10, 1932, *FR*, 1932, II, 773.

⁹⁶ Stimson to Gilbert, Oct. 11, 1932, tel., *ibid.*, 773.

⁹⁷ Belden to Castle, Oct. 26, 1932, *ibid.*, 776.

should put pressure on the Firestone interests to hurry their negotiations. Pierrepont Moffat, the chief of the Division of Western European Affairs, answered that he felt "we could hardly do this as, with the amount of money that they had legitimately put into this project the matter of whether or not they were satisfied that the plan would protect them in advancing more money and rewriting the contracts they now had, was a matter which they alone could decide."⁹⁸ At the same time the State Department had to inform Reber, who complained about the bad impression of Firestone's intransigence upon the League committee, that "the Company has recently shown a marked reluctance in all matters pertaining to their co-operation with the International Committee in connection with the 'General Principles' adopted by the Committee and subsequently endorsed to the company by the Department as a basis for direct negotiation."⁹⁹

Firestone's representative in Monrovia, L. T. Lyle, was meanwhile informed by the Liberian government that it preferred to work through the League.¹⁰⁰ On the same day that Lyle was received by Barclay, December 17, 1932, the Liberian legislature passed a joint resolution calling for the suspension of all payments on the Firestone loan until such time as the country's revenues were to reach \$700,000 a year. This step, as the Brunot Committee had already indicated,¹⁰¹ was a real necessity forced on Liberia by economic conditions. Nevertheless, and in spite of his feeling that "the responsibility for permitting this opportunity to arise rests partly on the Firestone interests,"¹⁰² Stimson protested sharply in notes dated December 23 and January 23. The latter communication, which threatened that the United States might "hold Liberia responsible for the effects of those acts,"¹⁰³ was not accepted on the fully legitimate grounds that, since America still refused to recognize its government, Liberia had no choice but to refuse diplomatic intercourse.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Memo by Moffat, Nov. 10, 1932, *ibid.*, 777.

⁹⁹ Stimson to Reber, Nov. 23, 1932, *ibid.*, 782.

¹⁰⁰ Stimson, Memo "Liberia," 19, SP.

¹⁰¹ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, July 1932, 1365, 1383.

¹⁰² Stimson, memo, "Liberia," 19, SP.

¹⁰³ Stimson to Gilbert, Jan. 23, 1933, tel., *FR*, 1933, II, 884.

¹⁰⁴ Stimson to Gilbert, Jan. 28, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 887.

With the loan moratorium, the Liberian crisis entered a new stage. Firestone now made the repeal of the Liberian resolution an absolute condition for further negotiations with either Liberia or the League committee.¹⁰⁵ The State Department accordingly requested the League to put pressure on Liberia to revoke the December 17 measure. In replying, Lord Cecil pointed out to Stimson that Firestone had treated the League

with grave discourtesy and [has] left it entirely in the dark as to what is [his] real attitude towards the League attempt to come to the assistance of Liberia and prevent the recurrence of the terrible scandals which existed under the administration of ex-President King, who is, I understand, now one of the advisors of the Firestone Corporation. Several members of the Committee have arrived at the conclusion that the object of the Firestone Corporation was, by insisting on the rigid execution of what was, after all, a very onerous agreement, to drive the Liberian Government into such straits that they would be at the mercy of the corporation.¹⁰⁶

The committee felt that some concessions in return for Liberia's repeal of the moratorium resolution should be made by Firestone,¹⁰⁷ thus agreeing at least to some extent with that country's demand for a solution "appropriate to the social facts and not merely upon theoretic rights."¹⁰⁸

Stimson was in the difficult position of having to defend the interests of an American corporation despite his belief that Firestone had "not in fact been 'playing ball' with the League committee, whose interests in [his] behalf [he was] only too ready to enlist."¹⁰⁹ The State Department finally persuaded the Finance Corporation to promise definitely to send a representative to Geneva as soon as the December 17 resolution was repealed by Liberia, and further to allow a two months' *de facto* moratorium while negotiations were in progress. After Firestone had made these concessions, the League

¹⁰⁵ Stimson to Gilbert, Jan. 17, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 879.

¹⁰⁶ Mellon to Stimson, Jan. 25, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 884-885.

¹⁰⁷ Gilbert to Stimson, Jan. 25, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 885.

¹⁰⁸ Edge to Stimson, Jan. 20, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 881.

¹⁰⁹ Memo by Moffat of conversation between Stimson and Sanders, Jan. 26, 1933, *ibid.*, 886.

committee on January 31, 1933, *requested* Liberia to withdraw her moratorium measure; this displeased Stimson, who felt that such a step should be demanded as a juridical right.¹¹⁰ Liberia did not act upon the League's request, and the result was a deadlock in which neither Firestone nor Monrovia would budge.

To work out a new approach to the whole problem, the State Department on February 27 dispatched General Blanton Winship and Ellis O. Briggs of the Department on a mission to Monrovia. Shortly thereafter the new secretary of state, Cordell Hull, persuaded the Firestone interests to enter into direct negotiations with the Liberian government under General Winship's supervision. Under the agreement finally reached, the interest rate on the loan was decreased from 7 to 5 percent, with overdue interest payments to be met out of the proceeds from newly issued bonds.¹¹¹

Upon conclusion of the agreement Firestone was coaxed, with great difficulty, into sending a representative to Geneva to participate in the drafting of a final plan of assistance. During the sessions of the League committee, which were moved from Geneva to London where they lasted until the end of June, the question of the nationality of the chief adviser remained the major stumbling block, since both Firestone and the American Colonization Society (also represented during the discussions) insisted on an American. The matter was finally left open in the plan of assistance that the League Council adopted and forwarded to Liberia,¹¹² with the clear warning that if it did not accept the plan as a whole, without further procrastination, it would be left to its own devices. The American representative in London, General Winship, from the beginning did not expect that the Liberians would find the plan acceptable, and

¹¹⁰ Gilbert to Stimson, Jan. 31, 1933, tel., Stimson to Gilbert, Feb. 1, 1933, tel.; *ibid.*, 893-895.

¹¹¹ Winship to Hull, April 8, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 905; Hull to Winship, April 11, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 906; Hull to Winship, April 20, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 907; memo by Moffat, April 29, 1933, *ibid.*, 909-910; Hull to Winship, April 29, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 911; Winship to Hull, May 7, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 911-912; Winship to Hull, May 10, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 912.

¹¹² Winship to Phillips, June 9, 1933, *ibid.*, 915-917; Bingham to Phillips, June 24, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 918; Bingham to Phillips, June 28, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 919.

he placed greater hopes in an amended loan agreement independent of it.

In the meantime American public opinion had undergone a shift. When it became evident that it was no longer social reform but the position of the Firestone interests that was the real issue in Liberia, the liberal press began to criticize American and League policy. In an article in *The Crisis*, Howard W. Oxley, former educational adviser to the Liberian government, accused this policy of being "bent on industrial enslavement upon a larger scale than ever before,"¹¹³ and called for sympathetic cooperation with Liberia instead of harassment. In a later issue, *The Crisis* appealed to the sense of justice and decency in the United States to stop the efforts that were being made "to wipe this poor little country from the list of independent Negro governments."¹¹⁴ In reporting a visit to the State Department by Mordecai W. Johnson of Howard University, W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of *The Crisis* and a former minister to Liberia, and Walter White of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for the purpose of pleading the cause of Liberian independence, *The Nation* called upon the public to "prevent this new imperialist grab."¹¹⁵ The State Department eventually had to take cognizance of this current of public opinion, which was also supported by the Foreign Policy Association. In a letter to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Phillips, the new under-secretary of state, referred to changing popular opinion but recommended continued cooperation with the League.¹¹⁶ The president agreed, but with "the clear understanding that we are not guaranteeing monies due the Firestones or making our continued interest depend on Firestone's financial interest. At all times we should remember that Firestone went into Liberia at his own financial risk and it is not the business of the State Department to pull his financial chestnuts out of the fire except as a friend of the Liberian people."¹¹⁷ This statement, of course,

¹¹³ Howard W. Oxley, "The Crisis in Liberia," *The Crisis*, XXXIX, Dec. 1932.

¹¹⁴ *The Crisis*, XL (Oct. 1933), 468.

¹¹⁵ Mauritz W. Hallgren, "Liberia in Shackles," *The Nation*, Aug. 16, 1933, 188.

¹¹⁶ Phillips to Roosevelt, Aug. 16, 24, 25, 26, 1933, *FR*, 1933, II, 924-926.

¹¹⁷ Phillips to Werlich, Aug. 22, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 928.

indicated a complete change in American policy and opened the way for the final adjustment of the difficulties with Liberia.

As General Winship had anticipated, the republic insisted on modifications in the plan of assistance, encouraged, as Winship reported from Monrovia where he had returned in August, by the French and by certain groups in the United States, as well as by the assumption "that in the absence of some overt act against Americans here, our actions will be confined to remonstrances and note sending."¹¹⁸ Monrovia's objections to the League plan centered on four main points: the excessive authority the plan allowed foreign officials; the possibility that an American might be appointed chief adviser (on this point Barclay had changed his mind, probably as the result of the American government's close cooperation with Firestone); the increase of the Firestone debt that the plan would entail; and the high cost of the plan, particularly the expenditures for foreign officials. Winship felt that it would be wiser for America and the League to make concessions to these Liberian criticisms than to withdraw the entire assistance scheme, leaving the country on its own and vulnerable to British and French machinations against its independence.¹¹⁹

Secretary Hull agreed to the extent of recommending concessions to reduce the cost of the plan, and he was finally able to prevail on Firestone to drop his demand for an American chief adviser.¹²⁰ At the October 1933 meeting of the Liberian Committee of the League, the Firestone representative made a further concession in liberalizing certain provisions dealing with the Liberian budget, which was tightly controlled under the 1926 agreement. The League's final "Draft Protocol establishing a Plan of Assistance for Liberia"¹²¹ incorporated these changes and was urgently endorsed to the Liberian government as the last effort the League would make on its behalf; the plan was to be accepted in full or not at all.

The hope that Liberia would accept it was small from the outset, in view of its representative's protest after the defeat of an amendment stipulating that neither the chief adviser nor the other foreign

¹¹⁸ Werlich to Hull, Sept. 8, 1933, tel., *ibid.*, 931.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 931-933; Hull to Roosevelt, Sept. 21, 1933, *ibid.*, 933-934.

¹²⁰ Harvey Firestone, Jr., to Hull, Sept. 22, 1933, *ibid.*, 935.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 945-959.

officials should have powers that would undercut those of Liberia's officials under the country's constitution:

To the mind of an unsophisticated African, such as I am, the rejection of that amendment was not only contrary to the Covenant of the League and the aforementioned commitments of the Council, but when taken together with the preamble to the Protocol now before the Council [which declared the plan of assistance to be an effort to preserve Liberia's independence] is in patent contradiction to the purpose for which the assistance is to be granted, a violation of the most elementary principles of logic.¹²²

The European powers, moreover, had lost interest, and France and Germany in particular would no longer cooperate in putting pressure on the Liberian government to accept the virtual League protectorate. The American chargé in Monrovia cabled the State Department on December 12, 1933, that the Europeans obviously desired "the onus of persuasion on Liberia to accept the plan to fall on the United States."¹²³

The Liberian government reacted to the League demand with further delaying tactics. It decided to send a commission to the United States to solicit the financial and moral support, especially from American Negroes, which would enable it to avoid the League protectorate. The commission was also empowered to settle the remaining differences with Firestone. On January 12, 1934, the Liberian legislature accepted the League plan with twelve reservations that entirely changed its character.¹²⁴ Geneva refused to consider these, and on May 14, 1934, the Council of the League of Nations officially withdrew the plan of assistance,¹²⁵ with accompanying British suggestions to expel Liberia from the League.¹²⁶

Continuing British interest in having something done about Liberia was manifested in a note of June 12, which urged the United States, now that the League's intervention had failed, to take some kind of action on its own, with which Britain was willing to cooperate. Accordingly, the State Department sent out to Monrovia Harry McBride, special assistant to the secretary and former finan-

¹²² League of Nations, *Official Journal*, Dec. 1933, 1639.

¹²³ Werlich to Phillips, Dec. 12, 1933, tel., *FR*, 1933, II, 964.

¹²⁴ *FR*, 1934, II, 788-789.

¹²⁵ League of Nations, *Official Journal*, June 1934, 509-513.

¹²⁶ Lindsay to Phillips, May 14, 1934, *FR*, 1934, II, 796.

cial adviser to Liberia under the 1912 international loan arrangement, to make a survey of the entire situation and to ascertain whether the country desired American or joint French-British-American aid or whether it wished the United States to stay out completely. It is remarkable that this seems to be the first instance in which the Liberians were asked what *they* wanted.

McBride's report¹²⁷ brought about a complete change in American policy. It applauded Barclay, who had held together the government of his country in an extremely trying period, and the plan of reform developed by the Liberians themselves, which included provisions for white advisers in the fields of general administration, native affairs, and the constabulary. Financial control, taken over by the Liberians as a result of the 1932 moratorium, would be returned to the American fiscal advisers provided for under the Firestone loan agreement. Considerable efforts had already been made in building roads and other public works, improving sanitation and education, and introducing administrative reforms that embodied the principle of indirect rule.

McBride expressed his belief in the good faith of the Liberian officials and the possibility of an economic revival in the country. Revenues were already beginning to climb as a more efficient system of tax collection went into effect, and the start of tapping operations in the Firestone rubber plantations would bring about greater employment and, through royalties, directly increase the government's income. The opening of the hinterland by new roads would lead to even greater wealth.

Stressing "that when the moratorium action was taken, the financial stress [upon the government] was practically unbearable,"¹²⁸ McBride recommended a compromise of the remaining points at issue between Firestone and Liberia. He particularly suggested readjustment of the loan with a reduction of the interest rate and of the number of foreign officials, as well as a change in the priority provisions for the application of current revenue, which would put ordinary government expenditures before the loan service charges. McBride also spoke of the great progress Liberia had made since he had been in the country in 1919, and he stressed the obvious, but

¹²⁷ Report by McBride, Oct. 3, 1934, *ibid.*, 806-825.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 811.

often forgotten, unfairness of comparing that country with the neighboring colonies, which had the advantage of being developed by financially strong countries. Since he considered the government of Liberia to be "functioning in a fairly creditable and serious manner," McBride suggested that the United States finally recognize Barclay and aid his government in carrying out its reform plan, especially by furnishing capable officials.

Acting on these recommendations, Hull informed the British ambassador on October 17, 1934, that "this Government is prepared to cooperate with President Barclay in whatever way may be possible to carry out his proposals."¹²⁹ The United States would officially recognize the Liberian administration as soon as it was convinced of the seriousness of the plans for reform and recommended that Britain do likewise. Firestone also declared himself willing to revise the loan agreement along the lines suggested by McBride¹³⁰ and to cooperate in other ways, such as sending a medical officer to Liberia to care for his native employees.¹³¹

On December 13, 1934, the Liberian legislature enacted President Barclay's three-year plan. The United States thereupon accorded recognition. A visit of Harvey Firestone, Jr., to Monrovia paved the way for a revision of the loan agreement that met most of the Liberian wishes.¹³² By the beginning of 1935 Liberia had weathered the storm that had threatened its national existence.

The official American attitude toward Liberia during the independence crisis was influenced by various factors and underwent several changes. Originally United States concern was largely humanitarian. With the coming of the great depression, Firestone's financial troubles in Liberia had led him to demand American intervention to protect his investments. Although the conduct of none of the parties to this diplomatic conflict, Liberia not excepted, was wholly creditable, it must be acknowledged that Secretary Stimson, while sympathetic to Firestone's demands, never completely surrendered American policy to the interests of the rubber

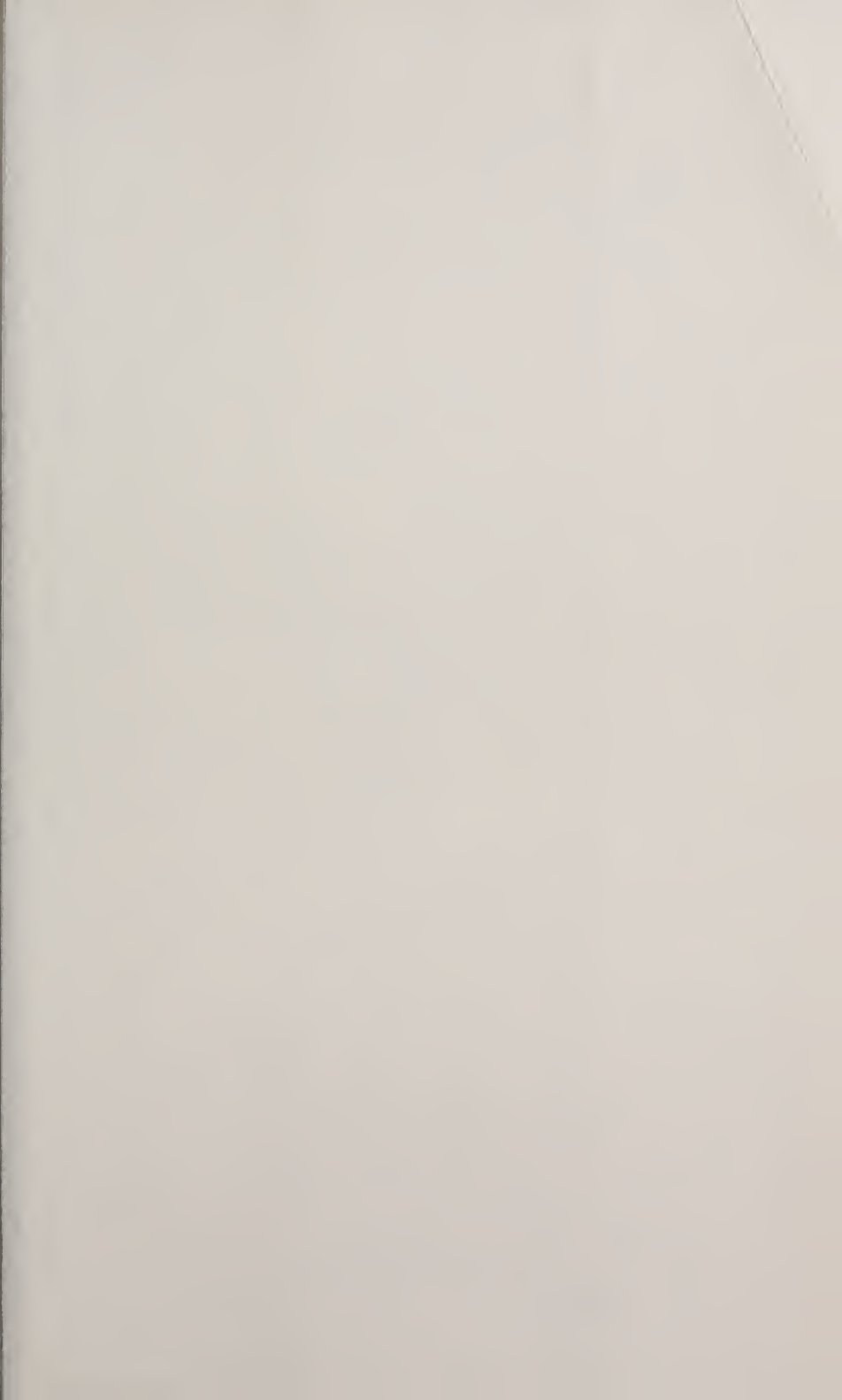
¹²⁹ Hull to Lindsay, Oct. 17, 1934, *ibid.*, 826.

¹³⁰ Phillips to MacVeagh, Nov. 9, 1934, *ibid.*, 827.

¹³¹ Hull to Hibbard, Nov. 19, 1934, *ibid.*, 829.

¹³² Hull to Hibbard, Dec. 21, 1934, tel., *ibid.*, 835.

corporation; he sought to arrive at an international settlement in concert with the League of Nations and the major European powers, especially Britain, which had always manifested considerable interest in Liberian affairs. With the failure of the League's plan of assistance—which did have the earmarks of a new international kind of colonialism—and with the coming into power in the United States of a new administration less bound to business interests than Hoover's, the problem of Liberia was finally solved in a spirit of friendly cooperation. Skillful Liberian diplomacy, as manifested in the use of delaying tactics, must not be overlooked as a factor in enabling that country to retain its position as the only independent republic in Africa.



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